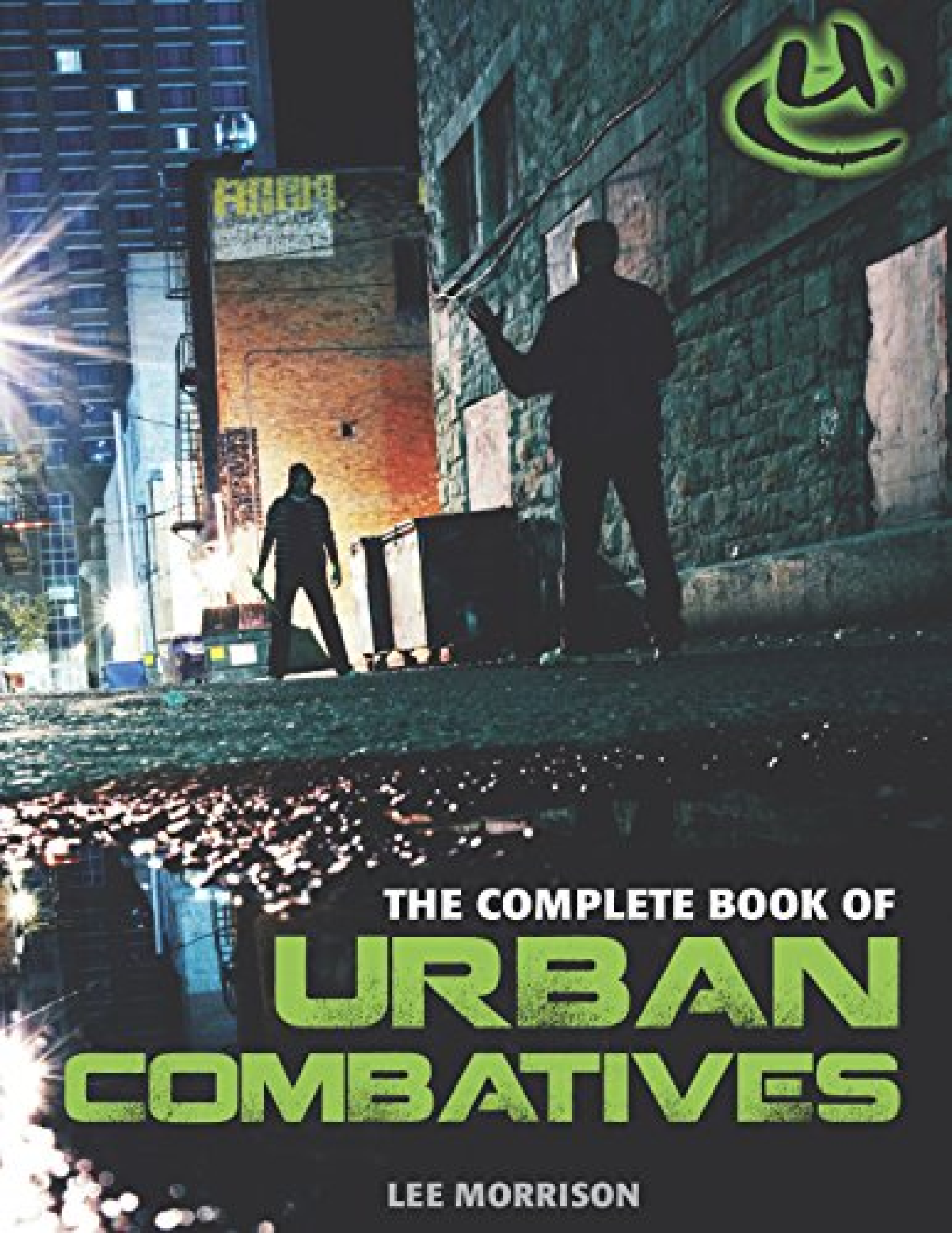
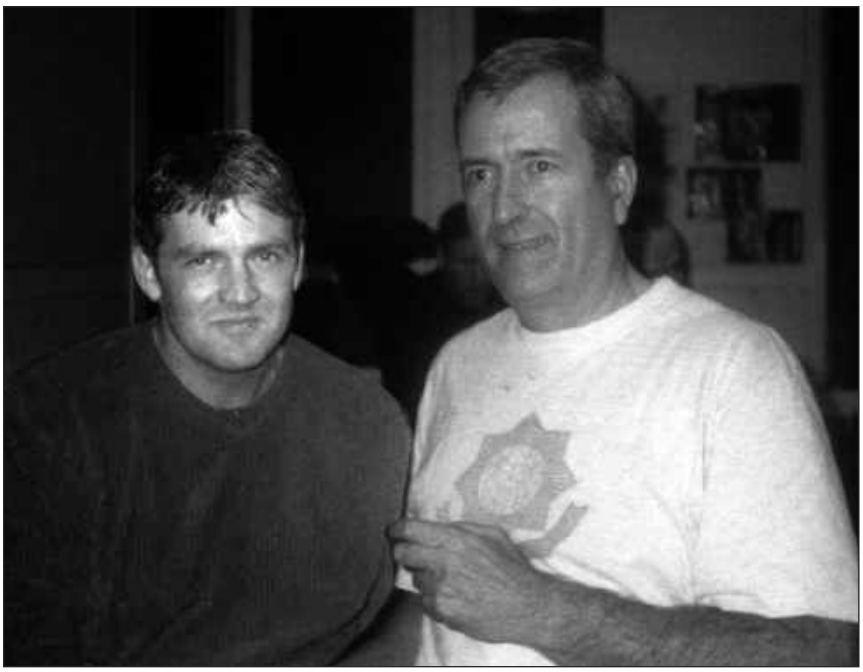


THE COMPLETE BOOK OF URBAN COMBATIVES

LEE MORRISON

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF URBAN COMBATIVES

This work is dedicated to my friend and teacher, the late Pete Robins.



The Complete Book of Urban Combatives
by Lee Morrison

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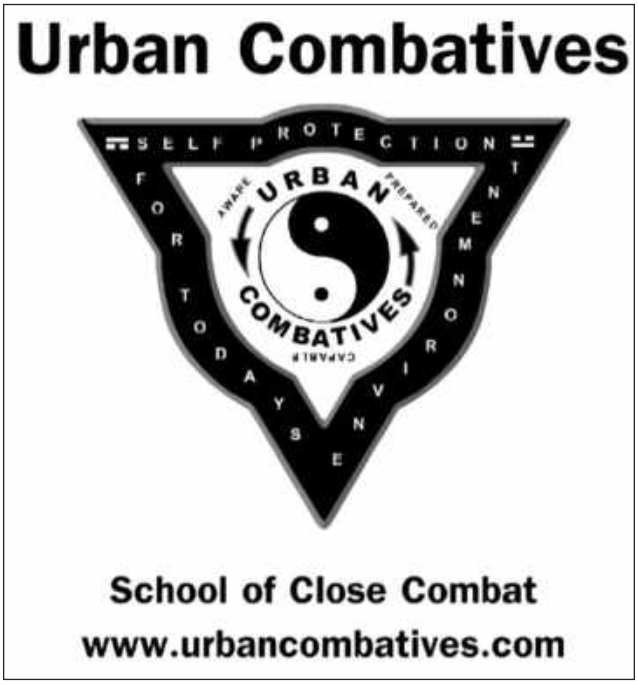
PREFACE

The sources of the information contained in this book come from some of the best self-protection and combative instructors in the world today. A lot of these ideas have been passed down on an instructor-to-student basis from as far back as seven decades. In some cases, the information comes from one person's individual experience, both my own and from those with whom I have trained or aspire to train. Like the majority of these great people I have studied with, I have soaked up the knowledge they gave me and, where necessary, adapted it to fit my own functional jigsaw puzzle so I can share this great knowledge with those who need it most. Although there is a large amount of personal input that goes into what I teach, I make no pretense that any of this material is unique to me—I merely carry on the torch to light the path for others. So read with an open mind and take what you need for your own functional jigsaw.

—Lee Morrison
Founder/instructor, Urban Combatives



INTRODUCTION

The contents of this workbook will give the reader an insight into the combatives curriculum I teach. I formed Urban Combatives (UC) after many years of researching various Asian and Western martial methods of combat. The testing ground for my research started with the schoolyard and progressed through adolescence, during which I, like most misguided young males, had my fair share of pub brawls and street fights. Then the research continued on during the 14 years I worked as a bouncer in the pub and nightclub environment of door security work.

To say that this was the most effective part of my combat-efficiency education to that point would be an understatement. Anyone who has been in a real blood-and-snot, violent confrontation knows what I am talking about. Thirty seconds on the street is worth three years in the dojo any day of the week. Multiply that by a lot and you too would have arrived at conclusions similar to my own and those of better men before me. Those conclusions are the genesis of this text: the information contained within is the result of a combination of active learning from my own experience and from people with whom I have trained or aspire to train. This book also reflects thousands of hours spent travelling, training, reading, and studying, sorting the wheat from the chaff—and believe me when I say that there is a serious amount of chaff in the martial arts world that is being passed off as effective and workable self-defense.

In fact, the first indication that such a system has missed the point is the term *self-defense* in the name: the word *defense*, in particular, indicates that you are in a situation where a physical response is not only required, but is, in fact, your *only* option. What about avoidance and escape, made possible through awareness of your environment and an understanding of attack ritual, dialogue, and body language, so that you have knowledge of such events before they unfold to the point where a physical option is all you have? This is why the top people in this field think that the term *self-protection* has a lot more to offer.

If, for example, you spot a potentially violent and aggressive individual walking behind you, and your street-smart instincts tell you that he's already sized you up as his next victim, you can decide to turn the next corner and run like a bastard to avoid and escape the experience. Is that not good self-protection? Of course, it is. If, however, you have no chance of escape, and this individual is

intent on destroying your future quality of life to whatever degree he can, then the only option left is a physical response. In such a case, you must not hesitate to turn him into a shit spot on the pavement. The bottom line to achieving such a goal is to hit first, hit hard, and be ferocious. If this creates the opportunity to escape, then do so without hesitation; if not, then you must continuously attack until the threat is terminated and then escape to safety at the first opportunity.

Good personal security and street-smart awareness must be the power base for your stay-safe game plan. But lurking just below the surface must lie an unwavering conviction that if you are confronted by violence, you are prepared to respond in kind, overwhelmingly. This is why I am drawn to the methods of Western combatives. My training is very much influenced by people who have tested their systems under the pressure of reality, be this in live situations or dynamic simulations involving scenario training, or a combination of both. In short, I chose to learn from people who know that what they have will stand up without hesitation or indecision at the moment of truth. For example, my role models include W.E. Fairbairn and E.A. Sykes, who pressure-tested their Defendu system in the violent streets of 1920s Shanghai, China, and Coventry doorman Geoff Thompson, who learned what worked for him in some of the worst establishments in the "neon" environment and on the mat of his dojo during hundreds of his legendary "animal day" sessions.

In the early chapters, I concentrate on the fundamental aspects needed to build a functional self-protection game, including awareness, avoidance, verbal dissuasion, the use of the fence, and preemptive strikes. All these apply as your main ingrained response to any situation in which you find yourself. I then go on to deal with the "what if" factor. For example, what if I'm caught unaware and have to now react to some kind of attack from an aggressor, be it a grab or a sucker punch? What if the fight goes to the ground? What if there are multiple attackers? This is what you might call the situational aspect.

I also provide some attribute-developing drills that will help you develop a good support system for the game plan I outline early in this manual and the combative principles and mindset that should accompany every aspect of your training.

The main conclusions I want to share with you in terms of my knowledge of self-protection are as follows:

1. Get your head right—all fights begin and end in your head. Prefight perspective is everything.
2. In a physical sense, cultivate the ability to hit hard and, when possible, first.
3. Take the initiative and then exploit the initiative you've created until the confrontation is over.

On that note, I will end this introduction by asking you to read this manual with an open mind and to take from it whatever you find useful.

CHAPTER 1 ▶ URBAN COMBATIVES INFLUENCES

The UC system has many influences from both Western and Eastern martial arts. In some cases, it may be a technique or a concept. Quite often I have been influenced by a method of training from a mentality perspective, which in turn will be reflected within UC. No one method of martial training will ever hold all the answers, so you must keep an open mind and stay on the cutting edge of progress. With that said, there is nothing really new in the field of reality combat. Sometimes someone will come along and try to reinvent the wheel, but most of it has been done before. The thing to understand is that good self-protection is threefold. First, you have a few sound personal security concepts in place, such as the development of good awareness skills that cover 360 degrees of your environment, including everyone and everything within it. Add to that an understanding of your enemy, including any body language, attack rituals, and dialogue he may present. Finally, you have to gain an understanding of fear and how you will feel and react under pressure.

The physical side of the equation is pretty simple: just develop two or three effective strikes that can be executed hard and that work well.

My martial arts journey began at the Shotokan karate center, where Senseis Enoeda, Tomita, and Ohta taught at the Marshall Street dojo in London.

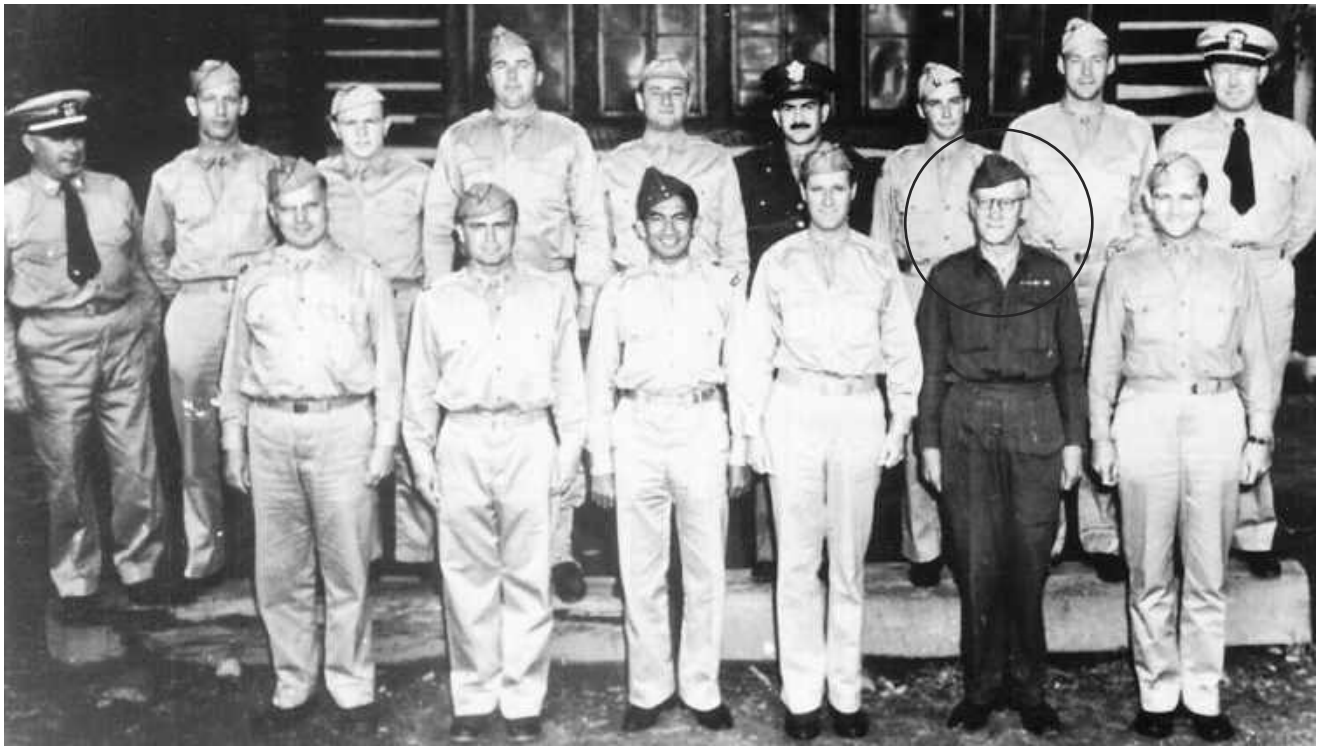
Drill them until you reach a level of unconscious competence, which comes from practicing strikes for several thousand reps with visualization and real intent on the impact equipment until they become a part of you. Then take your said artillery, put on some body armor, work with noncompliant training partners, and put it under the pressure of dynamic simulation and scenarios, or "animal day" type training, until you know what works for you and are confident in what you have.

FAIRBAIRN AND SYKES

Develop a small toolbox of workable gross-motor skills that are adaptable to a myriad of situations and retainable under fight duress conditions, tested with noncompliance during simulated conditions, for this will form your main game plan. Everything else that you look at and practice is a contingency plan for your main game plan. The idea is not to accumulate techniques, but rather to find something workable for

A typical street scene from 1930s Shanghai. Note the Red Maria with mounted gun used by the Shanghai Municipal Police during that period.

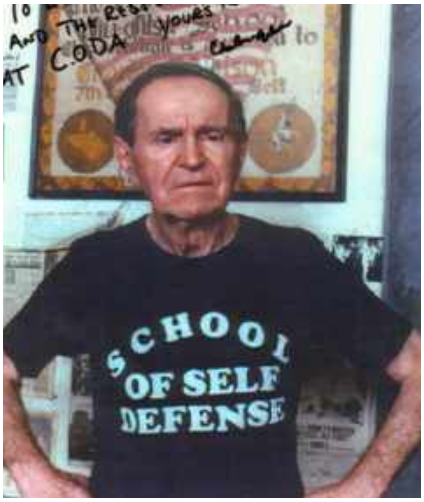
W.E. Fairbairn in his Shanghai Municipal Police uniform.



W.E. Fairbairn is second from right in the front row in this photo of the Allied and American training staff at Area B in 1942.

Col. Rex Applegate.

Another friend of UC is New Zealand's Geoff "Tank" Todd.



Charles Nelson.

A photo of Charlie Nelson and me. Charlie was one of the last remaining close-combat legends of the World War II era. This fine old gentleman taught his system of self-defense for more than 50 years in New York City.

Bob Spiegel was a student of Nelson's for 15 years and is now considered a worthy successor to the Nelson system.

you. This is why my biggest influence here comes from Western combatives, particularly from the military close-quarter combat instructors of World War II, including W.E. Fairbairn (1885–1960), who served as a constable drill instructor and firearms trainer with the Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP) during the 1920s at a time when Shanghai, China, was considered the most violent city on Earth.

Fairbairn and his noted collaborator E.A. Sykes (1883–1945) developed their system of Defendu, which evolved from practical experience. Fairbairn trained and organized riot squads for the Shanghai police and developed what he called "gutter fighting," a system of fighting born out of methods that got real results. Fairbairn's methods were later taught to British Commandos and parachute troops during World War II and became a major influence in the hand-to-hand combat training of the U.S. Marine Corps through Col. Rex Applegate. Other great instructors of this period include the Marine Corps' John Styers, Dermot O'Neill, and the late Charles Nelson.

CHARLES NELSON

Nelson taught hand-to-hand combat to civilians after the war in New York City for nearly 50 years. The successor to Nelson's street-proven system was Robert Spiegel, a 6th dan in karate and a student of Nelson's for the last 15 years of Nelson's instruction. Spiegel continues to represent the Charles Nelson Defense System in New Jersey. I was very fortunate to have met and trained with Charlie on the day of his 88th birthday, and I am pleased to be one of Spiegel's students and now the only instructor outside of the United States certified by Nelson to teach his methods. Charlie

Nelson's lineage can be traced back to Fairbairn, who taught Shanghai Municipal Police Sergeant Dermot "Pat" O'Neill. In Shanghai, O'Neill trained extensively with a U.S Marine named Sergeant Kelly, who on his return to the United States taught Charlie Nelson.

CODA

Another combatives group that I am very proud to be associated with is CODA: Combative Oriental and Defendu Arts. CODA is the only British representative of Fairbairn's Defendu system, and was founded in 1993 by Peter Robins, Paul Child, and Dave Smithers in Essex. Sadly, Pete Robins passed away a few years ago. Occasionally CODA has been fortunate enough to get instructional visits from some great overseas close-combat instructors, such as Den Brinkley and the late Bob Kasper. The lineage from Fairbairn continues to our mentors, the late Bill Pilkington and the late Les Martin, and then on to the founder/instructor of the CODA group, Peter Robins.

After World War II, people were fed up with the violence of the war, and training in close-quarters combat (CQC) virtually stopped. A handful of men continued in the techniques, but as time went by CQC was pushed aside because of the influence of the Eastern martial arts. Today there are only a handful of small groups around the world dedicated to keeping the skill and knowledge of these Western combative methods alive. More modern links to CQC come from former U.S Marine and Vietnam veteran John Kary, the founder/instructor of American Combatives, a very effective system based on the principles of Fairbairn, with instructional options available for law enforcement, military, and civilian personnel alike.

Above: American Combatives Master Instructor and Vietnam veteran John Kary. After having spent some time training with Kary's European representatives in the United Kingdom, I can confirm that the American Combatives School builds from the foundation laid by Fairbairn himself.

Left: Overseas CODA instructor and a major authority on close-combat and authentic World War II combatives Den Brinkley.

Above: CODA instructor and close-combat historian Peter Robins.

KELLY McCANN

One of my major influences is a former major in the Marine Corps named Kelly McCann (who also wrote under the pen name of Jim Grover). McCann is the owner of Crucible located in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He is considered a real-world operator who knows what works and what doesn't from violent personal experience. His vicious system combines the best elements of combat-proven military combatives, hardcore street fighting, and his distinctive in-your-face attitude. The result is an easily learned, exceptionally brutal fighting system that really works.

Former U.S. Marine Kelly McCann is considered by many to be the modern king of combatives. His teaching methods and in-your-face attitude have had a huge influence on my training.

DENNIS MARTIN

Another influence from combatives comes from Dennis Martin, defensive tactics specialist and chief instructor of his CQB Services. Den is well known in this field and has written for various martial arts magazines for years. I started reading Den's articles in *Fighting Arts* magazine relating to realism in training when I was a teenager. Having trained with Dennis and studied nearly all his written words, I can tell you that this man knows his stuff. I am particularly proud to be one of only a handful of certified combative instructors in his CQB Services. Dennis has influenced my training and teaching methods in a variety of ways, one example being the task-related fitness and conditioning drills that he teaches, which he calls Close Quarter Battle Drills.

Dennis Martin is well respected in the self-protection field.

GEOFF THOMPSON

Another huge influence for me is one of the best reality self-protection instructors in the United Kingdom, top martial artist, veteran ex-doorman, and best-selling author Geoff Thompson. Thompson should need no introduction to anyone involved in martial arts today. He has written dozens of books about self-protection and his unique "real self-defense" system. Thompson opened everyone's eyes during the early 1990s with his revolutionary ideas and concepts, including the introduction of the fence, his controversial "animal days," and the content of his famous book *Fear: The Friend of Exceptional People*. He has also written self-help books about the power of positive thinking and gives frequent inspirational talks at book signings and seminars. Geoff is a true example of someone who has reached the summit of his martial arts journey.

We have all read how, through adversity, we can transcend the physical and reach a

Geoff Thompson has been a major influence for me since the early 1990s. Geoff and others like him—including Jamie O'Keefe and Peter Consterdine, among others—were pivotal in establishing the importance of reality training and the need to adapt the martial arts so they will work for you in a real situation.

Peter Consterdine of the British Combat Association (BCA) is another pioneer in the self-protection world. Peter is one of the hardest-hitting individuals for whom I have ever held the pads. His striking impact is nothing short of scary.

Maurice Teague is another top BCA instructor who has applied his craft more times than most would care to remember.

spiritual plane, where we truly know ourselves and are free from ego. At that point, we strive to give back to others and become truly humble. Thompson is all that, and he is like most of the truly dangerous men I have met: a real gentleman. His influence on my training comes from his teachings about understanding the enemy of today and his modus operandi, using the three-second fight "sniper option," and gaining an understanding of fear and techniques of fear control, along with the importance of pressure-testing techniques and utilizing line-ups and preemption, philosophy, and self-belief. I am proud to call Geoff my friend and teacher.

INFLUENCES FROM OTHER MARTIAL ARTS

In addition to coming from individuals, influences can be in the form of techniques, training methods, and concepts from some of the other systems that I have trained in over the years. Like most individuals who have spent the past 20-plus years training in the martial arts, I have always been both fascinated and impressed with the late great Bruce Lee. But it wasn't until the last few years that I managed to train in his self-developed method of combat of Jun Fan jeet kune do (JKD).

Jeet Kune Do

The two current trains of thought regarding

Bruce's system are the JKD Concepts approach and what's called Original JKD. The first looks at what was known as Jun Fan gung fu, which is pretty close to what Bruce Lee was doing in the 1960s, along with additional concepts from Thai boxing, French savate, the Filipino and Indonesian arts, and some Brazilian jiu-jitsu. The Original JKD approach pretty much sticks with the entire curriculum just as Lee practiced it until he died in 1973. Having trained with some top individuals from both methods, I can see the pros and cons of each. I am not at all interested in what has now become a political issue between the two groups. I'm only interested in adding what's functional for use in a live situation.

Paul Vunak

To that end, the best instructor I have come across, without doubt, is Paul Vunak, one of the top men in JKD Concepts and head of Progressive Fighting System. He is responsible for the development of the Navy SEALs program called Rapid Assault Tactics (RAT), a program designed by a martial artist to give the average person a fighting chance against a bigger and stronger opponent. It is one of the most aggressive, in-your-face, continuous-attack methods I have ever seen. Although I am not certified by Sifu Vunak and therefore do not teach the RAT method, I have trained with him and taken what he taught me and adapted it to fit into my own functional little box.

For example, I have eliminated his methods of entry, which I feel are more applicable to a match fight scenario. Instead, I prefer to strike preemptively off my fence from a talking range of two feet or less and then to close into a Thai boxing neck clinch and use the finishing tools considered the most destructive weapons on the body: headbutts, knees, and elbows. What is ironic to me is that after 20-plus years of JKD, kali, and silat, Vunak has, without realizing it, returned to what was taught by one of Fairbairn's instructors, Pat O'Neill, who taught hand-to-hand combatives during World War II. Vunak made the same use of the head, knees, and elbows as finishing strikes with the same in-your-face style. For example, in the termination phase of RAT, you clinch onto your opponent's neck and headbutt or elbow his face, following with sharp knee strikes to his groin. The latter was a favorite of O'Neill's and was often referred to simply as an "O'Neill to the nuts."

Sifu Paul Vunak is one of the most talented martial artists with whom I've ever trained. His Rapid Assault Tactics (RAT) program is as streamlined, functional, and combative as it gets.

Dermot O'Neill is in the background observing his recruits during one of his combatives sessions.

Sifu Vunak in the termination phase of a Rat strike. Note the destructive knee strike to the groin from the clinch.

This is a classic example of two great minds coming to the same conclusions through similar experience. The above show photos the similarities between Vunak's RAT system and what O'Neill was teaching the British Commandos and U.S Rangers during World War II some six decades earlier. Both methods emphasize effective use of the body's most destructive weapons to your opponent's most vulnerable targets, combined with tenacious in-your-face aggression.

Filipino Fighting Arts

Certain elements of the Filipino arts are also included in the UC curriculum. For example, flowing from one strike to another will sometimes resemble some of the lines of attack used in kali, as will some of the methods employed during the use of weapons, though they are a lot more abbreviated and streamlined. I also like the Filipino mentality of one-upmanship—if you bruise me, I will break you; if you pick up a knife, I'll pick up a sword; if you beat me today, I'll come back and beat you in your sleep. It's along the lines of the combative mindset, again born out of real pressure through time and live experience. In a combative sense, Filipino martial arts offer lots of useful methods that can be employed with artifice or deception. I also like certain aspects from *kina mutai*, which is the Filipino method of biting, pinching, and gouging. This, along with Richard Dimitri's Shredder Concept, can literally save your arse in a horizontal street grapple.

Richard Dimitri is a superb new-wave realist in the field of modern combatives.

Sayoc Kali's Tuhon Tom Kier.

Western Boxing

Western boxing has also influenced UC. Boxing has everything from fine body mechanics to the mental toughness you can develop from the progressive sparring and toe-to-toe "milling" type drills. Right from the start, you are hitting with full power and where necessary learning to desensitize to getting hit, which, of course, from a combatives perspective is not the objective—we are not interested in any type of reciprocal exchange of blows. On the contrary, if you are to engage in combat, your only objective is to take out the enemy with a one-sided, continuous attack, but the mutual full-contact exchange that boxing can offer you will be a massive asset to your aggressive forward drive and will desensitize you if you do get hit, providing you with the mental toughness to carry on attacking. This is something that no amount of marching up and down in lines in a nice uniform while punching air can give you. Boxing is a useful delivery system that will teach you how to move and perform your strikes in combination.

Boxing can also offer an extreme level of fitness to those who take it seriously. Add to this a couple of lessons learned from two old-time champions. From Jack Dempsey, you can learn his "falling drop step," a concept that allows you to focus all your body weight behind your shots, and from Rocky Marciano you can take his inspirational, unshakable self-belief. Boxing is the revealer of character and the unveiler of truth.

Wrestling and Grappling Arts

One final influence comes from the wrestling and grappling arts, both Eastern and Western. Grappling is considered a support system from a street perspective.

Although the foundational pins and escapes of judo are practiced, the main tactic if you have ended up on the ground with your opponent is going to be biting and gouging to effect a fast release and return to your feet as quickly as possible. I have also taken a couple of takedowns from the Greco-Roman style of wrestling, in particular the snatch, which I have found to be effective in live situations on more than one occasion.

A lot of what I would call functional "control and restraint" or "subject control" that I teach to doormen and security people comes from a variety

U.S. defensive tactics and close-combat instructor "South-narc" influenced my take on soft skills and personal security greatly.

UK Instructor Mick Coup has also influenced the UC program, particularly in the area of drill formation.

of sources, from modern-day combative groups within the field of specialist security right back to the Defendu and Charles Nelson Defense systems of old. These were essentially jiu-jitsu from the old days when all holds were preceded by a strike or a distraction of some kind, such as the methods used by the law enforcement officers or more specifically by the SMP during the 1930s when Fairbairn was actively operational on the streets of Shanghai.

THE MENTAL COMPONENT

Neuro-Linguistic Programming

In addition, it is important to point out that as soon as the student has grasped an understanding of the physical hard skills necessary for combatives, he is encouraged to incorporate principles of the advanced learning methods from neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). An example of this is, before delivering a strike, to visualize something that will help you to access the fighting state of mind—in other words, to help you summon a controlled explosion of aggression. This may require a little practice but can be achieved. What you visualize is up to you, but when you find something that brings about the desired result, strive to harness the feeling and anchor it to the strikes you practice on the pads. So now rather than just going through the motions, you are encouraged to use every physical and emotional fiber of your being to enable you to strike with bad intention. This is what is meant by "emotional content." Other instructional methods from NLP are also employed for both instructors and trainees alike.

SUMMARY

This concludes the influences for UC to date, but like any good student, I remain open-minded and ever prepared to learn. All modules in the UC curriculum are geared toward dealing with the potential violence that any of us could face in our day-to-day lives in any environment. As well as training with the physical tools needed to deal with a larger and stronger assailant, we also tackle the psychology of combat, such as fear control and operational performance under adrenal stress, along with other elements that work from a power base of awareness that will allow you to spot and avoid most confrontations before they start. All elements are designed as a whole to provide the student with a functional game plan that can be tapered to the needs of the individual, whether for civilian self-protection or door/event security, or law enforcement, military, or close-protection personnel.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT DOES THE TERM *COMBATIVES* MEAN?

"Combatives are like a shovel, built for digging holes!"

—Kelly McCann

In the *Oxford English Dictionary* you will find the term *combative* defined as "argumentative and/or willing to fight." The word *combatives* is not found in the said dictionary. In the main, it is a modern term coined by the self-protection fraternity that has come to mean the use of anything that works or has proven itself to work under real fight conditions. Kelly McCann, my friend and a major influence for me, defined combatives (*or kem'-ba-tivz*, as he prefers to spell it) as "self-defense concision," or more in-depth as "a set of personal combat principles applied to an intentionally limited number of simple (predominantly Western) self-defense fighting skills that are easily recalled under duress and able to be linked, creating short combative sequences."

My own definition is similar. Whether influenced by methods old or new, combatives to me represents a compressed curriculum of personal security skills (street smarts) backed up by a small toolbox of workable gross-motor hard skills that are simple to learn and efficient under the stress of fear, confusion, and fatigue—or, in short, fight stress. Such skill sets follow certain principle directives and are, without exception, mentality driven!

When used in the context of street-oriented self-protection, street combatives refers to competent personal-security skills and effective methods to counter violence from a civilian perspective in a modern-day urban environment. So what constitutes a street assault? For our purposes here, a street assault refers to any potentially escalating violent confrontation that encroaches upon you, whether in the street, a parking lot, a shopping mall, a stairwell, bar, nightclub, or anywhere outside your own home (a home invasion can present different rules of engagement) from any person/s known or unknown to you, for any reason or motive.

Further, here we are assuming the employment of street combatives from a civilian perspective, although combatives can provide solutions for operational individuals also. In fact, combatives came from a military background and extend to the rules of engagement for soldiers, police, and security personnel, including close protection operatives. The methods to counter violence remain the same. Your objective from a civilian perspective is always avoidance and escape; if that is not immediately possible, then you should attempt de-escalation. If the situation requires that you fight back, then you be first and significant!

Those who have experienced real fights will agree that it is better to attack than defend. In a

fight, you are either the hammer or the anvil; it's your choice. The bottom line is that, during any fight dynamic that is not a reciprocal exchange, such as a combat sport, there is one person or side delivering a beating and one person or side receiving it. Which role do you want to play? Make no mistake: violence carries consequences, and those consequences are always negative. If I'm forced to deal with two guys in an alley because they have halted my movement, blocked my escape route, and are about to cause me some serious harm, then there is a clear and present danger that consequences will follow. Although my objective as a civilian is to escape or extract myself, and to do only what's necessary to facilitate that escape or extraction, there is a very likely chance they will get hurt—plus, there's a chance I'll get hurt!

Life-changing injury and even death are plausible, as is the possibility of unpleasant consequences. Inevitable police presence after the event could lead to prosecution and heavy fines, even imprisonment, even if I did, as I should have, employ a level of force that paralleled the threat. This can be a difficult measure to calculate, especially when you take into account your current mental state and the adrenal stress you'll experience during such a high-threat event. That's why avoidance and escape are the most attractive options. But bad shit happens, and if it comes your way it would be very useful to have the tools to deal with it, don't you think? So think of this book as a workshop manual that supplements efficient training with a competent method of instruction. As I always say, it's better to have the skills and not need them than it is to need them and not have them.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MARTIAL ARTS AND COMBATIVES?

Most of us in the combatives fraternity have heard the quote from Kelly McCann in which he answers the above question:

> *"The main difference between martial arts and combatives is that martial arts are something that you do WITH someone—in other words, there is this reciprocal exchange of movement going on, where he does this and I react by doing that—whereas combatives are something that you do TO someone or ON someone. In other words, I am going to take this sack of potatoes and just beat on it!"*

There is no sparring, fencing, or reciprocal exchanging of blows; the physical action on your part is completely one-sided. I think Kelly's statement sums it up very well. It points to the mindset and well-defined goal of the combatives trainee: to be single-minded in your objective to defeat the enemy. Combatives were born out of real experience and designed purely to counter violence. Any method that worked by doing just that was considered combative.

In this chapter, I would like to expand on the subject a little more. Let's start by looking at the martial arts as they are practiced today both in the traditional sense and in the field of mixed martial arts (MMA) and combat sports. The latter has produced athletes of amazing physical and mental prowess. Nothing can be taken away from these modern-day warriors who practice Vale Tudo, no-holds-barred and cage fighting; what they do in their field is truly astonishing. But what they do is in one way or another governed by certain rules that define a sporting spectacle. Such matches don't include the pre-conflict "interview" stage, which consists of conflict indicators and possible criminal acts. When one person scores the final point or the bell rings, the fighters are automatically separated; therefore, the match will also lack the post-conflict stage, in which an escape, citizen's arrest, or police involvement may take place.

The outcome of the match will dictate a winner and a loser, but this is not a life-or-death struggle, nor is it a matter of self-preservation. Real fights unfold rapidly and offer virtually no preparation

time, overloading the mind with information and requiring split-second decisions to survive. They often include multitasking, such as protecting others, defending against a weapon, deploying your own weapon, and communicating with others. This is miles removed from the sporting arena.

Looking at the martial arts in the more traditional sense, practicing martial art for art's sake does, in my opinion, have a lot to offer. Most will give you a solid foundation on which to build your skills, along with teaching you such physical aspects as correct body mechanics; natural body weapon formation; physical conditioning; attributes of speed, balance, coordination, and power; discipline; and self-confidence. If your aim is to practice for fitness and recreational activity, the martial arts are a perfect choice.

If your objective is to gauge your own progress and development, then most traditional systems will provide you with a yardstick. If competition is your thing, then most traditional systems can offer you that aspect also. Most systems will also promote the self-defense element that they contain. So it would appear that the martial arts are indeed multi-tasking activities with a lot to offer anyone who is prepared to put forth the effort and time it takes to learn them. The problems arise when individuals with no experience with real violence find themselves in a potentially violent confrontation for the first time in their lives. When they try to apply the self-defense element, away from the traditional dojo setting from where it was developed in the harsh and unforgiving realities of the urban street setting, they find that what they have been taught simply doesn't work.

The reality gap between the street and the dojo environment is simply too vast. That's not to say that the skills of the martial artist won't work against the potential street aggressor. They can, have, and will work—just not without first having been adapted to the conditions of the urban setting. To prove this, take a look at W.E. Fairbairn's research into all the Eastern systems available to him in the 1920s in Shanghai, a time when Shanghai was considered the most violent city in the world. Fairbairn studied the martial arts and took from each what he considered valuable for his police forces and then added to them specific elements from street fighting and Western bar brawling along with some dirty tactics. He then pressure-tested all of these methods to determine exactly what worked and what didn't on Shanghai's mean streets. After doing this for a period, he concluded that he needed to compress the curriculum to a few basic methods that would consistently work under the stress of fear, disorientation, and confusion—a need to become, as he himself said; "attack minded and dangerously so!" Fairbairn's conclusions were born out of real experience.

The main reason that the self-defense element in many martial arts programs fails is threefold. First and foremost, if the trainee has never been in a real violent confrontation before, chances are he will never have experienced the adrenal stress that accompanies the same. Bearing in mind that the training methods presented by most martial arts instructors are 99-percent technique and are skill based, there is a good chance that the adrenal stress part of the equation will not have even been addressed in passing conversation let alone replicated through scenario training. The second component that contributes to failure relates to the actual physical skills or the techniques employed, most of which were designed to be used against a practitioner within the same martial arts system and have not been adapted for use against an unpredictable and noncompliant street attacker. Finally, there is mindset, which is at the core of any functional combatives program. Mindset consists of 99-percent attitude, intention, and the willingness to step up and do whatever it takes to win.

For me, this is the essence of what combatives are all about, and this is where the main difference between martial arts and combatives lie. But as any look into history will show, it has not always been this way. Just take a look at the meaning for the word *martial*; it is a warring term. Indeed, martial arts were designed to be used in war. They were designed to be very much combative. Take a look at the Samurai warrior. Read the writings of Musashi, a true martial artist in every sense of the term. In Musashi's classic *The Book of Five Rings*, you will find examples proving that Musashi's martial strategy was about as combative as it gets. Examine some of the documented evidence of the old Filipino masters of escrima and kali who would fight in challenge matches to the death with the tool of their trade: a stick or a bladed weapon.

In the last example, evidence clearly shows how a warrior who was capable of the most flamboyant visual display of his art compressed his curriculum to a few basic methods of employing his weapons, such as cutting or striking the opponent's hand to defang the snake and disarm him of his weapon, and following up with a strike with the stick or a thrust with the knife, which would in the majority of cases end the encounter right there. This came from a single-minded combative purpose: to defeat the enemy. This is what mindset is all about. So when did the martial arts we see today become less combative? After World War II, many in society were, for good reason, sick of war and violence, and a lot of the tried and tested methods of close combat were discarded, put away out of sight and out of mind.

Another demilitarizing aspect of the martial arts came when the father of modern-day judo, Jigoro Kano, introduced a streamlined and adapted form of his art as a sporting activity in Japan's school curriculum, later to become the Olympic sporting event we see today. Previously judo had been a lot more combative, with its emphasis on "blows before throws" and the heavy inclusion of *atemi waza* (striking techniques). Pre-war judo and ju-jitsu were indeed brutal arts before the sporting aspect was introduced to Japan and the rest of the world. That's not to take anything away from the art of judo, as it is practiced today. It still contains combative aspects. Just take a look at its methods of strangulation and imagine some of the bone-crushing throws taking place on a paved or cobbled street instead of a mat and you'll get the picture.

Further examples of the change in martial arts include the art of karate-do that has been practiced in the West since the 1960s. As much as this fine art has to offer in terms of a traditional self-defense foundation, it is miles removed from the karate-jitsu, "one strike, one kill" methods of the old Okinawan masters, as many of the true applications of kata (*bunkai*) have revealed through recent research.

Throughout the decades, we have seen various phases in the martial arts media rise and fall: kung-fu in the 1970s, ninjitsu in the 1980s, and more recently kickboxing and sport karate in various forms. Taekwondo was included in the Olympic games, and the 1990s saw Brazilian ju-jitsu and grappling take the world by storm. These, along with the introduction of no-holds-barred competition, continue to be major pioneers for cross training and practitioners of the mixed martial arts still popular today. All these arts have something to offer, but they are still not combative in the true sense of the word. It is true that self-defense (a term I dislike) does come under the same umbrella as the martial arts, but true self-protection skills are miles apart from martial arts in the traditional sense, and combatives are at the extreme end of the self-protection scale, though all are interrelated, as we have seen.

So what makes a system combative? How will such a curriculum differ from its traditional counterpart? A modern combative system should consist of two parts: a competent instructor and a functional, pressure-tested curriculum. The inclusion of the following points is an indication that your system is on the right track.

- Emphasis on avoiding confrontations, an option made possible through the development of a heightened state of awareness
- Preemption in the form of a continuous attack using gross motor strikes that will eliminate the threat if avoidance is not possible
- Use of natural, everyday positions as a fighting stance from which you can control space and become ballistically offensive in a heartbeat
- Focus on mindset and willingness to do whatever it takes to win
- Basic strikes that will work both preemptively and reactively
- Skills and tactics that will work under the stress of disorientation, confusion, and fear
- Plenty of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) anaerobic and task-oriented fitness training in order to develop mental toughness
- Understanding of adrenal stress and operational performance under stress
- Discussion about the moral and legal use of force
- Emphasis on heavy impact and contact to train muscle memory
- Simple, effective counters to common street attacks
- Brutal groundfighting techniques
- Inclusion of dirty fighting and tactics

- Regular practice with improvised weapons
- Curriculum that can be adapted for use for a real-world operative, such as a law enforcement officer or close-protection operative, as well as for civilian self-protection
- Regular simulation and scenario stress training using protective equipment and realistic role-playing

What can the combatives trainee expect to gain from such a system? A complete novice who is training in a good combatives program with a competent instructor and a curriculum containing all the above elements will become a capable individual within a relatively short period, depending on the individual's capacity to learn. Combatives were designed to be easy to learn, workable, and retainable under the effects of stress, fear, and confusion. To quote Kelly McCann again: "What you learn in the afternoon must work for you that evening in the parking lot."

All actions are simple gross motor movements learned through repetition to a point of unconscious competence. Therefore, a person without any previous training or experience of violence can still become functional in combatives within a short time. If you are lucky enough to find an instructor who applies modern learning technologies, such as NLP, to his instruction, then you will compress the time it takes to become proficient even further. Then there is the kind of trainee who comes into combatives from a previous martial arts or combat sports background who already has a good foundation from which to build and will, due to the attributes already acquired, become adept over an even shorter time.

A student who already has some real-world experience of violent confrontation, either from encounters during adolescence or experience working in an environment that commonly includes aggressive behavior, will have already covered a lot of the psychological aspects as well. Such an individual will bring a lot of talent and ability to the combatives table. I'm speaking more in the sense of attributes developed as opposed to techniques collected. Please understand that I am by no means saying that a beginner must already have such a foundation in order to become adept in this game. As I have already said, the newcomer will achieve a fair degree of competence over a short period. After all, World War II combatives were designed to make the operative completely operational in a very short time, sometimes a matter of mere hours. What I am saying is that if the trainee has a previous foundation, coupled with the active learning from real experience (even replicated scenario training will count as real experience to a fair degree), then he will have an advantage coming into combatives training. He will, without doubt, be on the road to becoming the best he can be in the area of self-protection.

From my own experience—based on 30-plus years of training in an array of both Eastern and Western martial arts, along with the experience gained from working the doors for over a decade and from the regular pressure-testing of the combatives training that I practice—I can tell you that I am more proficient as both an instructor and a student as a result of that experience. In the big picture, I know personally that I am still on a learning journey and still have much to discover. But in my humble opinion, I feel that having an individual with such a foundation pursue the study of modern-day combatives will bring the combatives fraternity into the new millennium as pioneers for the future.

"*We should train to perform reasonably well under conditions of EXTREME stress rather than exceptionally well during compliant conditions, like most traditional martial arts!*"
—French Special Forces unit member

"You will be attacked when conditions most favor your attacker and least favor you."
—Kelly McCann

"Train as you operate; operate as you train."
—Phil Singleton

"Whenever you deploy and it's different from the way you train, the training's wrong."
—Dennis Martin

CHAPTER 4

FORMULATING A SELF-PROTECTION GAME PLAN

"If one does not plan and takes the enemy lightly, one will certainly be captured by him."

—Sun Tzu, *The Art of War,* 300 B.C.

The first thing an instructor of any workable combatives system should give his students is the formula for a fundamental game plan. This should contain the following basic concepts and principles of commonsense personal security. The first foundational stone is always going to be awareness, which is indeed the bedrock of self-protection. This includes having a deep understanding of the color code system and what's known as the OODA loop. Both of these concepts will be covered shortly, relating to all aspects of environmental awareness.

Once awareness is in place, you will have a much better chance of exercising your priority option, which is always going to be avoidance and escape. If you can spot a potential problem before it develops and therefore take evasive action, then you have exercised good self-protection. You have no business getting physical with anyone if the possibility of avoiding the situation is open to you. Of course, there will be times when avoidance is not possible, and I will cover such situations as we go on.

Two further aspects of awareness that are also essential to your game plan are an understanding of how the aggressor of today actually operates, and the dialogue and attack rituals he might use. For example, if the aggressor is planning a street mugging, the initial approach will be followed by some kind of deceptive question, such as, "Excuse me, mate, have you got any spare change?" This will then be followed by an attack or the threat of an attack.

If his objective is simply gratuitous violence for violence sake, it will usually start with initial eye contact followed by a remark like, "What the f**k are you looking at? You got a problem with me?" This will then progress to the assault or threat of the same. The important thing to realize here is that his distraction is designed to not only distract you, but also to provide him with feedback to confirm whether you are the safe victim he thought you were. If he gets the response he's looking for, such as you freezing or showing any obvious signs of fear, then you can expect him to progress to the physical attack.

In situations where you can't avoid or escape and the potential aggressor is approaching, it is vital that you protect your personal space and occupy the gap between you and him. You already know that most confrontations will start with talking as an entry before the attack. What you must

also know is that this approach and dialogue will take place 2 feet or less from your person, and from here the gap will close in an instant. The assault that follows will be savage and unrelenting until you go down, at which point you will be kicked and stamped senseless. Armed with this knowledge, it becomes obvious that you must protect this vital distance and prevent your aggressor from closing this gap, which will be his final action before the violence.

To do this we must use the fence, basically a nonaggressive posture that will allow you to control the gap and buy the time needed for you to act. The fence will be covered in more detail shortly. Suffice it to say that any action you take from here—whether it's an attempt to defuse the situation with verbal dissuasion or to take the person out with your well-rehearsed preemptive strike—it is your fence that will make such action possible.

The final aspect of awareness comes from gaining an understanding of yourself. The fact is that any confrontation you might find yourself in is going to trigger an adrenal response. This is the flight-or-fight response, which is practically guaranteed in any potentially dangerous situation. Again, this aspect will be touched on in more detail later. To recap on this simple game plan, observe the following:

GAME PLAN

- Awareness—stay switched on.
- Avoid and escape where possible.
- If approached, protect space with the fence.
- Verbally de-escalate the situation, if possible.
- If not, strike first, fast, and hard and then escape.
- If necessary, keep striking until there's no more threat and then escape.

NOTE: Having a prepared game plan based on situational awareness will increase your reaction time and provide you with a proactive opportunity to deal with whatever you may be dealt.

COLOR CODES

Staying switched on is the true power base of your self-protection game plan. You must strive to develop complete awareness of your environment and of everyone and everything within it. I have already talked about criminal awareness and understanding the enemy; in the next chapter, I will cover the subject of self-awareness and understanding of the adrenal response, both essential parts of your overall switched-on state. With environmental awareness, you are purely concerned with what is going on around you right now. This is what's known as condition yellow, or living in yellow. Nearly three decades ago, a combat pistol instructor by the name of Jeff Cooper developed a system of color codes that he used to define varying states of awareness, which is now known worldwide in the field of personal security and self-protection as Cooper's Color Codes. These are defined as follows:

Condition White: Switched Off

This is also what the Federal Bureau of Investigation calls the "victim state." In code white, any attack on your person will be an ambush attack; that is, you will be assaulted and battered before you even realized that a problem existed. Unfortunately, this is how the majority of people go about their daily lives. Walking down the street while sending text messages on their phones or reading a newspaper or magazine while walking down the street are just two examples of being switched off to what's going on around you. Zeal in Boulder victims of an attack—whether it's a violent assault, an armed robbery, or someone running past and snatching the phone from their hand—will say something like, "It all happened so fast—he just came out of nowhere!" But truthfully attackers don't just appear out of nowhere. At some point before the assault, the perpetrator will have spotted you, analyzed your switched-off state, and selected you as a potential victim. Where were you while this was going on?

Condition Yellow: Alert and Switched On

This is a relaxed state of awareness and observation, where you are aware of your immediate environment along with everyone and everything within it. This is how you should strive to be at all times. This is not a paranoid state; it is merely relaxed awareness. With practice, this state will be-

come natural and habitual. If you are alert and aware, it will show in your body language. You should walk at a brisk pace with a confident gait, looking around frequently. This is what's known as "target hardening," which will not only allow you to spot potential situations before they develop, but will also make you less likely to be selected as a victim of attack. This is what's known as living in yellow.

Condition Orange: An Alarmed State

Alarm bells are now ringing! There has been a change in your environment and you are aware that a potential problem has arisen. Your mind is now evaluating the level of danger and threat you may be facing.

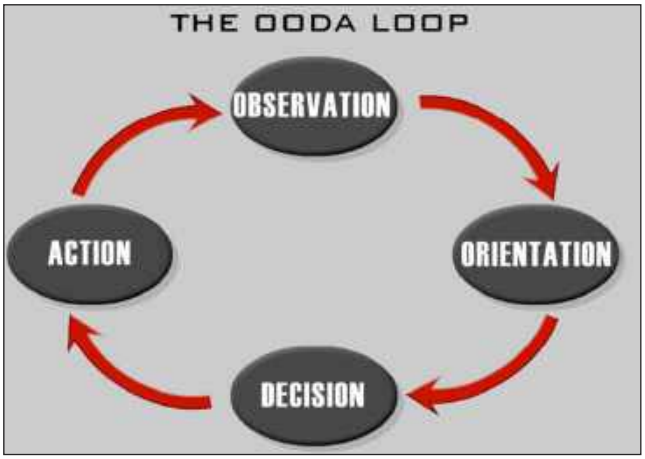
Condition Red: Fight or Flight

The potential problem has now become a real incident, placing you in immediate danger. You must act now to terminate the situation and eliminate the threat. The action you take may be to extract yourself as quickly as possible (avoidance and escape) or to employ a preemptive physical response.

OODA LOOP

A concept that was originally developed to train situational awareness to jet fighter pilots and is also now very popular in the field of executive protection is the OODA (observe, orient, decide, and act) loop. When you are in a state of relaxed alertness, or condition yellow, you are constantly observing (O) your environment. If you spot a potential problem, you would then orient (O)—that is, focus your attention on whatever you've observed to determine whether it is a threat. At that point, you decide (D) how you are going to act (A) on this information and implement your decision. After you act, you go back into the loop of "O": observing how the situation has changed as a result of your action. The cycle becomes a continuous loop of observation, orientation, decision, and action.

Here is a hypothetical example of how the OODA loop can be applied to your self-protection game plan. You're standing at the bar in a pub. You're switched on and *observing* your environment. You notice that two lads at the other end of the bar are starting to get loud and abusive to the surrounding patrons. When they look over in your general direction, and you *orient* that they are looking for trouble with whoever makes eye contact with them, you are therefore a potential threat. You then decide what you are going to do; in this case, you take *action* by making your way to the nearest exit while planning how to defend yourself should the need arise. You then move back into *observation* to see how the situation has changed. Is a new orientation needed? If they noticed you leaving and attempt to follow, then that will *orient* a different *decision/action* cycle, which you would then enact. If nothing further develops, then you would simply carry on with further *observation* of your environment.



SITUATIONAL CONTROL AND THE USE OF THE FENCE

As we discussed earlier, if you find yourself in a situation where avoidance and escape are not possible, it is crucial to protect your immediate circle of defense, or personal space. It is vitally important that you protect your personal space and occupy the gap between you and the attacker. You can do this by using your hands in a nonaggressive natural manner as if you were talking with your hands. This is what has come to be known as "putting up a fence." Geoff Thompson introduced this simple concept into the martial arts world during the early 1990s. Although he won't take credit for the invention of this idea, he is certainly responsible for its development and title.

Thanks to Thompson and his teachings, hundreds of people, me included, have used the fence

successfully in live confrontational situations. Sometimes, I used the fence just to buy enough time to verbally dissuade a hostile individual and in other cases as a platform from which to launch my own preemptive strike in order to prevent myself from being attacked. The whole point is to avoid assuming any kind of aggressive-looking guard at least in the beginning dialogue stage. If you take up a boxing guard for instance, you are showing your potential aggressor that you are now prepared to fight, therefore giving away that crucial element of surprise that is so necessary for your successful preemptive strike. The whole basis for your success comes from the use of deception.

Therefore, you want to assume a guard that will offer both offensive and defensive action but at the same time appears unassuming and nonaggressive to your opponent, thus allowing you to control those vital seconds before the situation turns physical. You want to have your hands in a position that will permit immediate action. How you hold your hands will depend on the spatial relationship between you and your opponent. He might be slightly outside touching distance (where either combatant would have to take a step forward in order to strike), or you will both be at touching range, defined as a distance of less than 2 feet (your fence range). Finally you may find yourself at very close range; this is less than ideal but common in a crowd situation, confined space, or a noisy environment that would make it necessary to be close in order to hear each other. The outside and inside fence range positions are pretty much universal within the field of self-protection and can be found in the Charles Nelson self-defense system, John Kary's American Combatives group, and Kelly McCann's Crucible instruction, among others. Hand positioning for the fence will depend on your personal preference. As long as you protect the gap and appear nonaggressive, then any way is fine. The thing to remember is that the fence is never held fixed or static; instead you move your hands in and out as if talking with your hands while protecting the gap the whole time.

Outside-Fence Range

This is a good position in which to stand when the distance between you and a potential threat is at arm's length and a step before engagement or just outside your own circle of defense. This natural position is what Charlie Nelson used to call the "Ed Sullivan stance."

Note that your arms are across the body with the striking side arm free and not folded in an interlocking position.

Your body is bladed to your opponent to present less of a target and your feet are in a natural and well-balanced position. You are aware of your aggressor and ready for action.

Fence Range

When dealing with a potential aggressor, it is very important to control the space between you in a very natural and non-static way. You can do this by talking with your hands and using nonaggressive gestures and natural body language.

This example takes the fence to a slightly more conscious level. This is for when the attacker is already extremely aggressive and your hands are held slightly higher. Any language in the world will get across the message: "Stay there—I don't want any trouble."

Note how the fence will allow you to control the space between you and the potential aggressor long enough to de-escalate the situation or, if the situation requires a physical response, use it as a launch pad for your preemptive strike.

When using the fence, the lead hand serves three functions:

1. It controls the gap. Without your fence, the gap will be closed in an instant, followed by a punch or a headbutt.
2. It acts as a feeler hand to tell you when an attack is imminent. When the aggressor moves forward, he is revealing his intention to attack. This is why it is so important to control this space. Check his first attempt at closing the gap by shoving him away with your lead hand as you take a step back to maintain the space between you. Back this up with a firm verbal boundary, such as, "Stay where you are!" followed by a pointing finger or a stop sign gesture. This show of force on your part tells him that his next show of aggression will be met with resistance. It's important to understand that his next attempt at closing the gap *must* be met with physical action on your part. The action that you take from the fence depends on the level of threat you are facing. If trying to talk him down fails, it is possible to spin him into a choke restraint and drag him off the premises.
3. The fence is a range finder. If your lead hand can touch him, then your rear hand can strike. If he is a real threat, then the only safe option is to strike preemptively.

Inside Fence Range

If you find yourself at close quarters with a potential threat, perhaps due to the circumstances of your environment (such as a crowded confined space), then you use a natural position that will allow you to keep your hands higher than his. One example of this is what Charlie Nelson used to call the "Jack Benny stance." For those who don't remember, Jack Benny was an American comedian who used to stroke his chin while he pondered his next punch line. This is the ideal position to take up if you find yourself too close for comfort.

To assume the Jack Benny stance, keep a balanced position with your feet and place one hand on your chin and the other just below your elbow—that is, folded loosely across the front of your body as if deep in thought. Drop your head slightly forward with your chin close to your chest. This way if he tries to headbutt, his face will meet the top of your head.

NON-PHYSICAL OPTIONS

"Those skilled at making the enemy move do so by creating a situation to which he must conform."
—Sun Tzu, 300 B.C.

Verbal Dissuasion

Defusing a potentially dangerous situation through talking is known as verbal dissuasion or de-escalation. The goal of de-escalation is to try to resolve a potentially hostile situation without having to resort to any physical action. De-escalation skills are useful when dealing with people who are highly agitated, frustrated, angry, fearful, or intoxicated. This might be someone you know, who's normally a peaceful individual but is simply responding to unusual or extreme circumstances with negative aggression. Or you may have to work with members of the general public on a daily basis, in which case verbal dissuasion can come in very handy when dealing with agitated individuals. Understand that de-escalation skills are a non-physical option if you find yourself in a situation where an attack on your person is obvious, such as an attempted abduction or sexual assault. In such cases, a physical response, preferably preemptive, is obviously the best option. The following principles should be observed and put into practice if verbal dissuasion is to be used effectively.

- *Project a confident and attentive demeanor.* Maintain eye contact and try to avoid averting your gaze as this could be taken as a lack of interest or regard, or of rejection. The idea is to find the source of their agitation and quickly gain a rapport with the individual. So be sure to stay attentive but at the same time try to avoid staring, which can be interpreted as threatening.

- *Mirror calm.* Control your level of arousal. Emotions can interfere with your mental and physical functions as well as those of the person with whom you're dealing. A low-to-moderate level of arousal will keep you alert and ready to take action should the need arise. Correct breathing will help you control anxiety under stress. A lot of people tend to hold their breath or breathe shallowly during times of stress, which only serves to increase anxiety. Instead breathe deeply into your diaphragm, not into your chest. A good cadence is to breathe in for three seconds, hold for two seconds, and breathe out for three seconds. This will help lower your heart rate and keep you calm. But don't make this obvious; keep it as natural looking as possible.

- *Positive self-talk.* People are also likely to allow negative thinking and self-doubt to creep in, sending themselves such discouraging messages as, "I'm in trouble now," or "I can't handle this situation." All such thoughts must be ignored and erased from your thinking. One way is to counter them with positive self-talk. Tell yourself, "I can handle it; for better or for worse, I will handle anything." If you practice deep, slow breathing and positive self-talk regularly in response to any form of stress or anxiety in your daily life, you will be more likely to

respond this way when dealing with a potentially hostile individual. In other words, this calming behavior will become your conditioned response to danger, which, in turn, will allow you to project confidence and might have a calming effect on your potential aggressor.

- *Protect your personal space.* Make sure that you use a nonaggressive-looking fence or a similar natural stance, which will also serve as a launch pad for your preemptive strike should a physical option become necessary.

- *Posturing.* This is the art of psyching out your opponent by the use of words, tone, and body language and sending the signal that you are either so calm and confident that you both know that you will take him apart if he doesn't back off, or that you are a complete lunatic capable of extreme violence, resulting in his demise if he continues to push it. Either role properly played out will, nine times out of ten, result in your opponent no longer wanting to enter the physical arena with you. The use of posturing usually comes into play if verbal dissuasion is failing and, for whatever reason, you are not quite ready to strike, or you sense that your opponent is not as confident as he pretends and you think you can psyche him out. Posturing is a last-ditch attempt before a physical response. If the said aggressor has already touched your fence hand by slapping it aside or by moving forward, he has already shown you his intention.

  Remember that the final precursor to violence is the attempt to close distance on you. At this point, you really must act. Posturing can prevent the conflict from entering the physical arena. The common response to someone suddenly realizing that he has bitten off more than he can chew is for him to suddenly start backpedaling, usually accompanied by some kind of self-redeeming comment such as, "Yeah, well, I'll see you again," or "You'd better watch your back, mate." What this person is really telling you is how he is backing off but is trying to save a little face as he does so. That's fine; take note of what he says and let him go. A situation avoided is a situation won. The things to bear in mind are that, once you posture, you have shown your hand and the chance of striking preemptively via deception has passed. If your opponent decides to take you up on the posture, you will now find yourself in a match fight. The truth is that most would-be aggressors are looking for a victim, not someone who is prepared to give them the fight of their lives.

  The only way that you will ever know for sure is to take the aggressor right to the door of potential violence. In my experience, the majority of people will back away, leaving the very few serious players who will walk through the door and take you up on it. This definitely isn't a case of "if you can't fight, wear a big hat." You must always be prepared to physically back up your posture with everything you have should your bluff be called. In short: if you posture and make it work, you will have ended the conflict without a fight; if not and your aggressor accepts your challenge, then you would have been fighting anyway. Acting cool and confident in the face of an aggressive individual (while protecting your personal space and remaining prepared to strike first should the need arise) sends out a signal that you are indeed a capable individual who has trod this path many times before and plants a seed of doubt in your aggressor's mind that he can intimidate you.

  This is what British self-defense instructor Geoff Thompson calls the "veteran approach," which sends a clear signal that you've been here before and are anything but a soft target. The "lunatic approach" gives the perception that you are somewhat unstable and unpredictable; both telegraph a clear "don't fuck with me" persona. Neither is attractive to a would-be predator looking for an easy victim.

  The lunatic approach requires four essential elements to work: voice, touch, stare, and body language, which all come together in one dramatic outburst. For example, you shove your aggressor hard in the center of the chest with both hands to create a gap of 3–5 feet, thereby removing yourself from his strike zone and triggering his adrenal flight response.

As you shove, use your voice to create a verbal boundary. Shout with venomous aggression, being sure to add all expletives as these will add weight and impact to your statement: "Stay back, c**t! You touch me and I'll bite your f**king nose off and spit it down your throat. Now f**k off!" The "C" word and the "F" word are all part of contemporary combat. As horrible as these words are to say and hear, they are an essential part of the overall effect. Augment this by describing the real physical harm that you are prepared to inflict on him, spitting at him, and ballooning and stalking (this is where you pace left and right as you continue to point and stare at your opponent). This is an innate way of making yourself appear larger and is very similar to how animals will stalk their prey in nature. This action will instill primal fear in

Here is an example of taking the fence to a conscious level of control. Shove the aggressor back to create space and then back it up with a firm or aggressive verbal fence to reinforce the boundary. From here you can switch on your posturing routine in an attempt to psyche out your opponent, but be ever prepared to back it up with the physical.

"You can call it the art of fighting without fighting." Bruce Lee, *Enter the Dragon*

your target if you're convincing enough. Some people are better at this kind of thing than others—it's a matter of combining the four elements to create the right chemistry. Posturing can truly be the art of fighting without fighting.

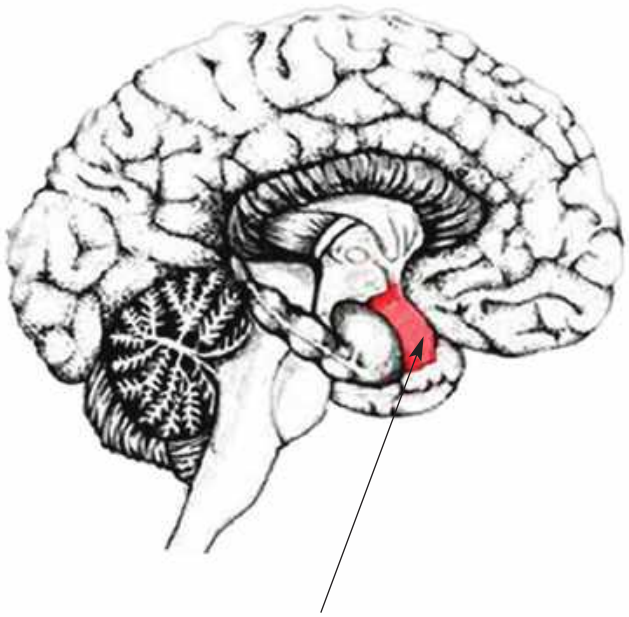
CHAPTER 5

UNDERSTANDING FEAR AND THE SURVIVAL STRESS RESPONSE

"Fear is the friend of exceptional people!"
—Geoff Thompson

In times of danger, each and every one of us will feel the effects of the survival stress response, which is triggered into action via the security control center of the brain, which is called the amygdala. The amygdala is basically the threat-detecting organ of the brain. During stress, such as that of a violent confrontation, the sympathetic nervous system will take over, and a neural surge will cause an increase in heart rate, which will, in turn, raise our blood pressure. This results in blood being withdrawn from our extremities in order to be pumped to our vital inner organs. Blood is also drawn from our brain cortex for the same reason, the result of which impairs our thinking, in particular our decision-making abilities. Due to this restriction in blood flow to the brain, the neocortex or higher brain is gone, and the limbic system (the part of the brain that is responsible for emotions) will now take prominence, making all complex decision-making impossible. The result is that we are now reduced to the intelligence of a dog.

In addition to this is what's known as an adrenal dump, a release of endorphins that will make you stronger, faster, and more impervious to pain and shock. The flip side of this coin is the mental implications with which you will also have to deal. These include auditory exclusion or impaired hearing and tunnel vision, the latter of which closes down your peripheral vision (hence the need to actively scan), among various other effects.



Located in the temporal lobe of the brain, the amygdala controls our autonomic responses associated with fear.

UNDERSTANDING FEAR

The body responds to danger by secreting adrenaline (also referred to as the fight-or-flight response), and this is what we often interpret as fear. If you do not understand this simple fact, then what you are more likely to encounter, especially if you are startled, is the freeze response. The only way to lessen the effect of the startle reflex and prevent freezing up is through awareness (i.e., being switched on), good threat-assessment abilities, and anticipation and understanding of the adrenaline sensation.

Expectation

First, expect to be scared because no matter how experienced you are that is how you will feel. Fear is the natural feeling prior to confrontation. When it "kicks off," the feeling that you would rather be anywhere else in the world other than where you are at that moment is a common feeling to all. If you feel like crapping yourself, just be aware that you are not on your own, we all (without exception) feel fear, which is the natural product of adrenal release.

Knowledge and Understanding

Second, you must understand what is going on inside your mind and body when you are faced with danger. If you have this understanding, then you will be better prepared to move past the mental and physical sensations of adrenal release so you can physically function effectively.

Side Effects of Adrenaline

Expect to get a fluttery feeling in the stomach, even a little nausea. This is the body's way of helping you to eliminate any excess weight you may be carrying from an earlier meal in order to allow you to move more quickly and efficiently. This is also why you may also feel the need to urinate or empty your bowels. You may also start to sweat, and your heart rate will increase. Another common symptom is that the leg will shake; this is more severe in some people than others. The shake is caused by the adrenaline surging through your bloodstream at high speed.

A loss of skin color may also occur; this is nature's way of protecting you. The blood leaves the surface of the skin so that you will bleed less if you get cut; plus the blood is being pumped to your vital organs (heart/lungs), where it's needed most. As a result of the blood leaving the brain, fine motor actions and decision-making abilities will become difficult.

Your vision will start to tunnel, as if you were looking through a toilet roll tube. This can make you vulnerable to an attack from the side: so, if you are focused on a threat in front of you, try to keep your peripheral vision open by looking around frequently.

On the positive side, as I said earlier, adrenaline will make you stronger, faster, and more resistant to pain. As you can see, all these effects have a purpose and are in fact essential to your survival. Try to gain an understanding of adrenaline so you can use it to your advantage.

Desensitization

Adrenaline produces very strange feelings with which most people have little experience. People whose jobs put them in harm's way on a regular basis (e.g., firemen, police officers, and security people, such as bouncers or bodyguards) become better able to deal with the effects of adrenaline. This is due to the fact that repeated exposure to situations that cause adrenal release gradually desensitize them to its intensity. The main reason individuals can act in the face of danger is because they anticipate and expect these feelings of fear. When you have experienced them before and know they will occur again under similar circumstances, you will not be caught off guard. Therefore, you will need to expect the sensations of adrenaline, as they will always be present in any confrontational situation you may face.

These feelings will never go away and are essential to our survival. Thus, with an understanding and regular exposure, you can become very capable in using adrenaline to your advantage and function effectively when it occurs. You must first control your inner self by taking a deep breath and relaxing your shoulders. Slow your body movements down so that you don't look guarded or jumpy. Your demeanor should be natural, smooth, and controlled. This does not mean you should not use an aggressive approach, because in some cases strong, assertive communication can be effective. But if you stay cool, the subject may doubt his ability to fluster

you and question whether he has chosen the right person to attack. He may wonder why you are so calm and imagine you have backup or that you are more of a veteran at this game than he is.

Scientific research into the adrenal state, also referred to as the survival stress response (SSR), carried out by a scientist in this field named Bruce Siddle, found that ability to function under the effects of adrenal stress is directly related to an increase in heart rate. At 115 beats per minute (bpm), most people will start to lose fine motor function. Skills that involve hand-and-eye coordination or finger dexterity will become difficult to perform. As the heart rate increases to 145 bpm and beyond, the body will start to reduce the efficiency of certain bodily functions that it considers less essential to survival during this time of stress, including effects to both the visual and auditory systems and temporary impairment to certain areas of the brain. The thing to remember is that in combat, your heart rate can go from 70 bpm to 220 bpm in less than a second. Such an occurrence can trigger a state of hypervigilance or the dreaded freeze response. At the very least, your decision-making abilities can become severely impaired.

Further research by Siddle suggested that the ideal heart rate for a functional combative response, allowing maximum reaction time and maintenance of gross motor skills, will fall into a range between 115 and 145 bpm. The key factor lies in our ability to remain within this ideal range. This can be attained through targeted training drills that will allow you to desensitize to the effects of adrenaline.

AGGRESSION THERAPY DRILLS, SIMULATION, AND SCENARIO TRAINING

Using body armor, role-playing, and aggressive dialogue in a controlled environment can greatly enhance your desensitization to the effects of adrenaline and improve your ability to remain calmer in such situations, thereby reducing the increase in heart rate.

Another critical factor in achieving this aim is controlling your breathing. In stressful situations, such as a potentially violent confrontation, there is a tendency to breathe in shallowly and then to hold your breath or to continue breathing at a very shallow rate, both of which only serve to increase your anxiety. Instead you should feed your lungs with oxygen by breathing in through the nose, taking the air deep down into the lower abdomen, holding it briefly, and then expelling the breath out through the mouth. Of course, you need to make this a habit so that it appears natural looking so you appear to be in complete control. This is more applicable during the verbal interview part of a confrontation or if you have some kind of warning that a situation is developing, as good awareness will allow. Then you will have the chance to gain control over your breathing.

A good practice to follow when you find yourself becoming adrenalized or even slightly agitated is to take three deep breaths. Breathe in for three seconds, hold for three seconds, and breathe out for three seconds, repeating this series until you achieve a calmer and more controlled state. I used to practice this method while working door security. Whenever I was called to a situation over the radio, I would use this technique en route to the scene. The lower you can keep your heart rate, the more control you will have.

Although the adrenal conditioning developed through the proper use of simulation and scenario-type training drills can help you desensitize to the effects of this essential biochemistry, it can never completely duplicate the same intensity as that of a real life-or-death situation. They will, however, allow you to reduce the reality gap between the dojo and the street. You should learn all you can about the workings of fear and adrenaline and the importance of breath control in lowering the heart rate, but desensitization can only take place through repeated exposure to those feelings.

This confirms what I said at the beginning about people in high-risk jobs learning to control their reactions and function under pressure because of the repeated exposure their working environment offers. You would be amazed at what you can get used to. To re-create such pressure in a training environment, you need to do some kind of scenario training or you could simply ask the top dog in your place of training for a few rounds of progressively harder sparring. If the mere thought of this scares the s**t out of you, you know that you're on the right track.

This was the idea behind Geoff Thompson's

now legendary "Animal Days," where the combatants would fight all-out through all the ranges to a knockout or submission. You can work up this kind of training over time, which will make the experience less daunting, or you could jump in at the deep end and just do it. Both methods have merit and can teach you a lot about yourself.

"Through adversity to the stars."
—The combatives mindset

"You must develop a fuck-it switch!"
—Mo Teague

If you only learn one thing from this book, make it this: physical combat is 90-percent mindset and 10-percent technique. By that, I mean in a live situation—one in which you cannot escape or verbally dissuade the assailant and your only option is a physical response—you must be totally committed to dealing with the threat in front of you. In other words, your mindset must be totally combative, and your killer instinct must be summoned and then unleashed into a controlled explosion of fight-ending intensity.

This is what is known as the "Gemini principle," which refers to your darker side, commonly called the "killer instinct." Believe me when I say that it is present in everybody. It can be defined as a vicious combat mentality that can be brought to a conscious surface to turn you into a fierce fighter free of fear and apprehension in a crisis situation. Since this instinct is present in every one of us, the question then becomes what to do with it? Some people feel that it is better to ignore this instinct and pretend it doesn't exist. Others acknowledge its existence but declare it a negative emotion that should be rigorously suppressed. Whatever your view, there can be no denying the fact that controlled killer instinct cultivated to the degree that it can be switched on and off at will is going to be the most useful attribute you can bring to a street fight.

To develop such control requires two essential elements: self-awareness and self-confidence. You must *know* yourself, your strengths and limitations, and be *confident* in your ability to defend yourself. To attain such self-confidence, you must become proficient in your techniques—obviously, if you don't know how to fight, you are not going to be confident in your abilities. But proficiency is still only 10 percent of the equation. Develop one or two good preemptive strikes to a level of unconscious competence and you'll have the technique side of things pretty much sorted. The other 90 percent is your intention to use that technique with 110-percent commitment to win.

Two excellent methods you can use to develop, refine, and channel this extraordinary source of strength and energy so you can start to use it to its full potential are visualization and crisis scenario training. Of course, you must also train to harden your mental and physical conditioning and determination. To sum up this chapter on the combative mindset, I have included the following extremely relevant quotes:

"You must be like a rag doll—no fear, no anxiety, no doubt can enter your mind. There is no time to regret once a fight has started; you cannot change your mind or question yourself in the face of action. Do not be concerned with escaping safely! Lay your life before him."
—Bruce Lee

"To be effective in a real situation, one key component must be in place and that is proper mindset. You must decide and reinforce regularly until it becomes an unwavering and inviolate conviction, that if you are offered violence, you WILL respond in kind overwhelmingly."
—Bradley J. Steiner

"Having made the mental preparations for combat, you will not experience hesitation or indecision only a clear course of action at the moment of truth."
—Bradley J. Steiner

"Confidence in yourself—the self-assurance that you can do it—is the first requisite: the rest is a matter of know how and practice. This confidence will allow you to stay loose, mentally and physically, until the moment which necessitates the application of your chosen plan of attack, then hit first, fast, and hard, pressing the attack to its successful conclusion."
—John Styers, author of *Cold Steel: Technique of Close Combat*

CHAPTER 6

NATURAL RESOURCES AND BODY WEAPONS

We all have natural resources and body tools that can be called on to keep us safer from violence in a time of need. How we develop and employ these resources can be maximized through our training.

BODY LANGUAGE, DEMEANOR, AND INSTINCTS

Body language and demeanor relate to how you carry yourself as you go about your daily life. Obviously, if your demeanor depicts you as meek and insecure with no outward indication that you are aware of your surroundings, then you may increase the likelihood that, at some time in your life, you may encounter someone looking to take advantage of such a person. Creating an outwardly positive self-image clearly states that you are a confident and alert individual. Just by standing tall and walking at a brisk pace with a confident gait is an immediate indication to anyone that you are a switched-on individual, which will, in turn, make you much less likely to be selected as a victim in the first place.

Most people who are attacked remember feeling a hunch, an intuition, or a nonverbal perception before something physical happens—the feeling that something is wrong. The sooner a person acts on this intuition, the more likely he is to be safe in the end. I am a firm believer in our instincts acting as a sixth sense; if something doesn't seem quite right, it is sensible to listen and act accordingly. Too often people find themselves in a dangerous predicament that could have been avoided. One example might be that you are alone and waiting for an elevator in a residential apartment building or shopping mall. The elevator door opens and you see an unsavory character inside. Here's the dilemma: do you get in regardless of what your instincts tell you, because you don't want to look foolish? Or should you trust your instincts, and say something like, "Go ahead; I'm waiting for someone." The latter makes more sense, doesn't it? Trust your instincts. An excellent book that discusses instincts from a self-preservation perspective in depth is Gavin De Becker's *The Gift of Fear*; this is definitely recommended reading.

We should use our intuition not only to gauge the danger of a situation, but also to plan our unique response, geared to our perceptions and abilities.

The knee and the shin used for striking and kicking.

NATURAL WEAPONS

Lower Body

Legs

The legs are the first of your physical resources as they offer your best option when available: escaping. Remember, you have no business getting into a possible violent confrontation if the opportunity to escape is available.

Feet

You can finish with the weapons and strikes of the foot. In nearly all cases, these strikes are made while you are wearing hard shoes or boots, in which case you use the tip of the shoe/boot for a toe punt kick to the groin or the front of the shinbone. You can also use the inside and outside edge of the shoe/boot for kicks to the shins or knees. Finally, the heel of the shoe/boot can be used to stomp the toes of a nearby opponent, as well as to stomp various joints, or the ribs or head of a felled opponent while you are still standing.

The inside and outside edge of the boot are tools for low-level kicking.

You can use the toe and heel points of the shoe/boot for kicking and stomping.

Lower Body

Hands/Arms

Moving on to the upper body, we start with the hands and arms. With the open hand, the natural-weapon options include the fingertips and thumbs

The palm claw.

The heel of the hand.

The cupped hand.

The edge of hand and the forearm, used for the ax hand strike.

for poking or thrusting into such soft target areas as the eyes or throat, as well as for ripping, tearing, and gouging. The heel of the palm is effective for striking the head/skull and chin, as in the chin-jab strike and the cupped palm, which can be used for slapping the ears, face, neck, or groin.

Finally, anywhere from the edge of the hand along the bone of the forearm to a few inches below the point of the elbow can be used in a chopping motion to the front, sides, or back of the neck, among other targets for the ax hand.

Next we have the closed fist, which can be used by those who favor punching. The bottom edge of the closed fist can be used for the hammer-fist blow to the nose, chin, back of the neck, or any point along the spine.

Moving on down the arm, we come to the radial edge of the forearm, which can be used as a swinging bat or clothesline-type of strike to the neck area. The point of the elbow can be used in a variety of ways with devastating effect to any target from the center of body mass to the shoul-

The closed fist is excellent for punching.

The radial edge of the forearm.

The bottom of the fist is used for the hammer-fist blow.

The point of the elbow.

der or biceps area of the upper arm for a disabling result. It is also effective anywhere on the upper attack line from the neck to the temple, should the severity of the situation call for a more damaging blow.

Head

The frontal area of the head can be used for the headbutt with very good effect. Anywhere from the center of the forehead, around the hair line, and up to the crown of the head can be used for striking your opponent's face from below the eyebrows to the upper lip, with the nose, cheekbones, and orbital sockets being the best target choices.

The teeth can be formidable natural weapons in close-quarter grappling situations. Any soft tissue target such as the nose, ears, lips, or eyebrows can and should be bitten with tenacious aggression should the desperate need arise. Of course, cross contamination from blood is a danger to consider, but if your life is at stake, then you need to consider your options. Also the fingers, nipple, and groin areas are all considered fair game for the bite. Moving on down to the lower limbs, we have the point of the knee for upward strikes into the groin, thigh, or face. The shin can be used for a sharp rising kick between the legs or as a Thai-style round kick to the thigh, side of the knee, or low to the outside of the ankle bone.

The headbutt.

The teeth can be used for biting an opponent.

CHAPTER 7

COMBATIVE PRINCIPLES

Fundamentally, there are a number of principles and concepts governing the practice of combatives. The basis of the UC self-protection and personal security comes from our formulated game plan, as discussed on page 22. In this chapter we will delve into strategies and tactics that will take us further into our exploration of functional close combat.

These tested ideas come from a variety of sources, making use of the knowledge from World War II combatives methods right up to the present, where we draw from more modern learning technologies. You will find such concepts in most of the combative groups we talked about earlier, including CODA, the Crucible, and Dennis Martin's CQB Services, to name just a few.

Throughout this book, I have emphasized the importance of mindset. No discussion about combative principles is possible without starting with the base principle of mindset.

MINDSET

To help introduce mindset, let's begin with the Vital Pyramid, which was originally shown to me by Dennis Martin, one of my early combative instructors. Originally developed by British SAS trainer John "Lofty" Wiseman, the Vital Pyramid is a teaching model for self-protection and is applicable across the board for civilians, law enforcement, security, and military operatives. The Vital Pyramid is used to define these principles in order of importance and relevance to efficiency in conflict. It is a way of presenting the core priorities of Self-Protection. As with any building, a good foundation is the most important factor, and in this case our foundation is mindset. You can know the best techniques and have the heaviest-caliber handgun available, but without the correct mindset, they will be useless. There is a saying: "Proper intent is

The Vital Pyramid.

more important than proper technique." The Vital Pyramid has been adopted by UC and remains the bedrock principle of any good combative method.

Without the proper mindset, all the other aspects will be missing a vital component. Your combative mindset can be summed up as the willingness to step up and do whatever it takes to win the fight. As Dennis Martin used to say, "You want a 'win mentality' rather than a 'survive mentality'—then at least if you don't win, you will survive." You must develop an instant switch that will allow you to access your killer instinct just like an attack-trained war dog. You need a controlled explosion of anger that you can use to deal with the threat you are facing. If justification is on your side, you must have 100 percent commitment and intention on your part. There are no half measures in combatives.

TACTICS

The next principle in order of importance is tactics. For instance, if escape is not an option and a physical response is required, then I want to hit first and keep hitting until I have eliminated the threat. So in this example, my tactics are preemptive, using a continuous attack with forward pressure.

SKILLS

My skills are basically whatever physical tools I wish to employ. Skills will be my main artillery strikes—those I feel most confident using as my starters, followed by whatever I employ to continue my attack.

KIT

The kit is the least important part of the pyramid, though it is still a vital component of your self-protection equation. Your kit might relate to the training equipment used during practice, or the improvised weapons that you carry. If you are a law enforcement officer, it will relate to the tools and equipment you carry, as well as your clothing or footwear that is worn accordance with your environment or the requirements/restrictions that administrators may have imposed on you.

Now that the combative principles in the Vital Pyramid have been covered, I want to discuss three other combative principles: artifice, controlled aggression, and dealing with the threat of multiple assailants.

ARTIFICE

Pronounced *ar-ti-fiss*, artifice is defined in the English dictionary as "trickery, a clever trick intended to mislead someone." This is a method of deception that can create the opportunity to eliminate a threat preemptively, thereby putting an end to a potential altercation quickly and clinically. There are two main ways that we use artifice/deception: misdirection, in order to create a distraction; and brain engagement, where we ask our subject a brain-engaging question just before we strike.

The latter method was favored by Geoff Thompson, who would line up his opponent by using the fence and then say something like, "So what you trying to say?" He would follow this an instant later with a well-practiced right cross/hook punch to the jaw, which would put a clinical end to the situation. This method can be applied to any favored preemptive strike that you choose, as long as you stick to the main principles of controlling space with your fence and "talking" with your hands while using deceptive dialogue. It is important to ask a question that requires a response, such as "What's this about? Why are you picking on me?"

It doesn't really matter whether the question is relevant to the situation at hand or is totally abstract, so long as it makes the aggressor think of a response, regardless of whether he intends to reply. What you are looking to do here is to engage his brain for a split second so that he is thinking not about his intention to attack but rather what you have just said. This will create the window of opportunity that you need to strike.

This will also act as an action trigger for your attack, which will take away any indecision on your part of when to attack. To train this response, you need to associate your selected question with your favored strike and bring it to play every time you practice on the pads or bags and with your training partners. It then becomes part of your practiced game plan.

The other way we use artifice is through misdirection. This has been around for many years and has been used by everyone from World War II vet-

erans to London's East End gangsters. The notorious Kray twins were known to offer someone a cigarette and a light and then as they leaned forward to light it, they would punch the victim hard in the jaw, which was by now slightly open, and knock him completely unconscious. A similar method was use by Britain's Special Operations, Executive in World War II. At the time, most people carried a metal cigarette case, which would be held flat in the palm of the hand and then rammed hard into and through the jaw, chin-jab style, as the recipient leaned in for a light. A similar example would be to offer a light for the recipient's pipe and then palm-strike straight down the throat.

The following are a few excellent methods of deception through misdirection that were shown to me while in a Dennis Martin training course by my good friend and training partner John Deacon, who has a thirst for anything combatively functional. The first example was discovered by accident while practicing chin-jabs with a partner. One of the combatants needed to cough to clear his throat and put out his hand on his partner's chest and said, "hold on" as he turned away to cough. John immediately saw the combat applicability and turned it into an excellent deception technique. The hand to the chest acts as a fence that will give you tactile awareness of where your subject is and what his intentions are; the slight turn away is done while still keeping your opponent in view and is used to set up your strike from an open or closed hand held in front of your mouth to cover as you cough before exploding forward and through the opponent's face with your strike.

The next artifice makes use of misdirection by engaging the subject's attention in the following way. As the verbal argument starts to escalate, make a quarter turn away from your opponent as you place one arm across your chest as if pointing to a rip in your shirt by your shoulder. This is a discreet way of chambering for an ax hand strike. As you do this, say something like, "What do mean? Look what you've done to my shirt." From here, drop-step forward and explode into an ax hand strike to the aggressor's neck area.

One final method is to use vulgarity. As the argument starts to escalate, take your hand up to your nose and blow snot into your hand. Make a motion as if to flick the snot at your subject's feet, and as he reacts in disgust, explode into and through him with your main artillery strike. This could also be used to buy you just enough time to draw an improvised weapon such as a pen or a cell phone.

Artifice 1: Brain Engagement

Here the thunderclap strike is used preemptively from the fence, preceded by asking the aggressor a question. The hands are held as if in exclamation to disguise the setup.

"Look, what's this all about?"

BANG!

Artifice 2: Cough-to-Palm Strike

At some point during the interview stage of the confrontation, while keeping your lead hand out to maintain the gap, turn away slightly (being sure to maintain the target in your peripheral vision) as you make the motion to cough. Just say something like "hold on" or "excuse me" as you cover your mouth and cough. Follow this motion an instant later by exploding through your target with your strike. In this case, I recommend a palm strike, but a closed fist will work well also.

Artifice 3: Low Distraction to Slap

Credit for this idea goes to two CODA guys who formed the Harlow Combatives group in London, Phil and Jimmy. Working off your fence, as soon as you have made the decision to strike, lightly touch your aggressor's chest with your fingertips. From here, wipe your hand straight down to the subject's groin to take his attention downward. This will create a distraction for a heavy slap to the face.

Artifice 4: Misdirection to Ax Hand

As the argument starts to escalate, make a quarter turn away from your opponent and place one arm across your chest, as if pointing to your watch. This is a discreet way of chambering for an ax hand strike. As you do this, say something like, "Look, mate, do you want my watch?" From here, drop-step forward and explode into an ax hand strike to the subject's neck. Follow up as appropriate. Here is an example of employing a back-handed strike, in this case the ax hand.

CONTROLLED AGGRESSION

In UC we aim to cultivate the resource of cold, clinical aggression to fuel our physical use of force. Such aggression (referred to by Fairbairn as vehemence) is a trained response that is switched on and off at will like a light switch until the threat is dealt with. What Kelly McCann calls "rage with reason,"' such energy is developed through correct training and employs complete emotional control, not "red mist!" that indicates a complete lack of control.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines vehemence as "showing a strong and intense feeling of demonstrative aggression." This is also referred to as killer instinct, the Gemini principle, or the darker side of oneself. This intense source of energy exists in all of us and is indeed an essential piece of the puzzle that goes hand in hand with the combative mindset to create the willingness to step up and do whatever it takes to win the fight.

Everyone's access point is different. What may trigger this instinct in some people may not do so in others. There is a documented case that illustrates this to good effect. The incident involved an aggravated robbery that turned to a brutal rape after a man broke into the house of a single mother. The woman was unable to find within herself what was needed to fend off her attacker and instead gave in without a fight in the hope that the ordeal would be over quickly. But as soon as her attacker had finished with her and decided to turn his attention to her 8-year-old daughter, everything changed. Within literally seconds of his opening the door to her child's room, the attacker slumped to his knees, clutching his neck in a desperate attempt to pull out a pair of scissors that had been rammed into his neck full force by the child's mother. The threat to her child was enough for this single mother to access her vehemence to a high enough level to protect her own.

This is, of course, an extreme example, but it is necessary to illustrate the points that the killer instinct does exist in everybody and, secondly, that most, if not all, of us indeed need to be prepared to do whatever it takes to protect the life of our own child or a loved one. Once we acknowledge the fact that this powerful resource of energy exists within each of us, we must then decide how best to make use of it in a combative situation. The ideal goal would be to fine-tune this energy into an on-and-off switch that we can control. If all options to avoid and escape, verbally dissuade, loophole, or posture fail and the situation is about to become combative, then your initial introduction into the altercation must be significant.

It must make use of the three essential elements of speed, surprise, and aggression. These elements combined with the willingness to do whatever it takes to win the fight are what make up the essential core or power base of the Vital Pyramid, that being our mindset. The next element we need to add to this equation once the decision has been made to be preemptive is our tactics, which in this case are preemption and continuous attack with forward pressure. This is the exact point where the switch is flipped on and vehemence is brought to bear. Skills are the physical tools that we employ to end the combative situation and terminate the threat quickly and clinically.

Here is a drill that you can practice that will allow you to put all these elements together. It will require an impact shield held by a partner. You strike the shield with a continuous attacking sequence that employs the same basic gross motor strikes covered earlier. Start the attack with two cycling hammerfist strikes as you move forward and flow into a series of ax hand and elbow strikes, finishing with a side-on clinch and knee strike. This drill is used only to illustrate the concept of what I'm talking about. Once you have that, you can apply it to any attacking sequence that you favor.

The aim of this drill is to practice flipping the switch on and off. For those who have difficulty in switching on their aggression, you will need to add the most powerful resource at your disposal, and that is the use of your mind through visualization or mental imagery. Close your eyes before the drill and imagine whatever it takes for you to flip on the switch, and then blitz the pads with your continuous assault for no more than three to five seconds with as much vehemence as you can muster. Then switch it off as you finish. The objective is to create a controlled explosion of anger.

Vehemence Drill

Here are illustrated examples of a continuous attacking drill that can be used to practice switching on short bursts of controlled aggression. Add visualization to the drills and try to muster as much emotional content as possible.

From a nonaggressive fence, throw two cycling offhand face smashes to hammerfist strikes.

Using the same open-hand strike, flow straight into a sequence of elbow to ax hand strikes using maximum aggression and forward pressure. (Drill continued on the next page.)

DEALING WITH MULTIPLE ASSAILANTS

The priority in any potentially violent situation is always to avoid and escape. Being switched on and aware will allow you to spot most confrontations before they start. In a multiple-assailant situation where escape is not available, your only option is to be preemptive. If you wait to be attacked in the hope that you will be able to defend and then counter, you will end up hospitalized or worse. For every second that you delay, you will end up fighting on more than one front. When they attack, it will be all at once, and it will be ferocious. Your only chance is to hit first and to keep hitting until there is no more threat.

You need to be single-minded in your attacks and target selection. Attack the eyes, throat, jaw, and groin with vicious intent. Though the odds are stacked against you, don't succumb to negative thinking—determined tenacity is the order of the day. Remember, numbers alone give the attackers the advantage that they need to overcome a single defender. The overall confidence of the pack/group mentality can be destroyed when you effectively incapacitate one or more of them very quickly.

Using Your Options

Awareness is the greatest self-defense tool at our disposal. As said repeatedly in this book, your best option is *always* avoidance and escape. You need to be street smart when you are out and about. The following scenario will give you a good idea of how being street smart could really save your tail in a mass attack situation.

1. Picture yourself in a crowded, noisy bar. The first intelligent thing to do is to position yourself where you can be approached from the front only. For example, you place your back to the bar or seat yourself with your back to the wall in a position from which you can see a potential threat ahead of time.
2. Your next action is to identify where your exits are, as they offer you an escape route.
3. Make a mental note of who is with whom. A casual glance over a rowdy group of people can tell you a lot about their body language, who might be a potential threat, and who is with him/them.

4. Also note the location of anything that could be used as an improvised weapon—an ashtray, a glass bottle, a chair, and a barstool all make excellent equalizers if the need arises.

Here's the scenario: You've just witnessed some bloke headbutt another patron unconscious at the end of the bar. As soon as the victim hits the floor, the attacker and his mate proceed to kick the man senseless, and the whole affair is over in seconds. Then the initial aggressor starts to look around the room to see who was watching and just happens to make eye contact with you. Because you had the audacity to make eye contact with him, he considers you a suitable candidate for his second victim. He makes his approach, which can only be frontal as you have positioned yourself with your back to the bar.

After what you have just witnessed, you are aware that this is the start of a potentially violent confrontation. You must act now! You have already scoped the exits; knowing that you cannot escape, you must act as soon as he approaches. Most fights will start with talking. As soon as he is in range, he begins to run his mouth to disguise his attack. Don't talk, yell, cuss, or push; just attack and hit him first. In this case, you smash him in the face with the heavy ashtray that you noticed earlier and placed next to you at the bar. This was a good shot. The first bloke is completely out of the game.

If his mate enters the fray, the encounter will now be one on one, much better odds than the earlier two-on-one option. In this case, you managed to catch hold of the first assailant you hit with the ashtray before he hit the floor. Using him as a barrier between you and his mate, you ram him straight into the second aggressor, shoving him backward into the nearest sharp edge. From here you do a 50-yard dash straight to and through the nearest exit to make your escape.

Your escape without injury was only possible because you were aware and street smart. This scenario was fictional, but it is a plausible example of how having a game plan can save your hide. We're not talking about being paranoid here, just street smart. If you practice this line of thinking when you are out and about, it will soon become a habitual and natural part of your behavior, just like relaxed awareness.

Practical Drills

Two against One

In any situation where you are facing more than one individual, it is vital that you gain a priority position. In the early interview stages of a confrontation (those vital few seconds before the physical starts), it is probable that one of them, usually the mouthy one, will engage you with some kind of introductory dialogue from a frontal position while his accomplice will move out to your flank in an attempt to blindside you with the classic sucker punch. Once you add the side effect of tunnel vision bought on by adrenal stress, you won't even realize this is happening until it is too late and you have been punched.

From here, the second aggressor will join in almost instantly, and the situation will quickly become critical. The obvious solution is to control both of them by using your fence. Understand that when doing so, your fence is now divided and is only 50 percent as effective because you must now control two fronts. This is why the need to be preemptive is so vital—every second that you delay, you risk fighting on more than one front. Fighting two people at the same time is very difficult even if you possess the skills needed to do it. But fighting two people singly, by taking each one out with a clinical preemptive strike, is relatively easy if you have the resources—the confidence and aggression—to hit first and hit hard.

The ideal when dealing with two individuals is to keep them in front of each other so that you are all positioned in a single line. You do this by positioning yourself to the flank of your frontal subject just as the second individual attempts to move to your side. This will allow you momentary control of the one in front while allowing you to keep the other one in plain view. Of course, this movement for control should only happen once, before action is taken, to either posture aggressively in an attempt to end the situation without violence or to hit first and follow up as needed before making your escape at the first available opportunity.

Priority Positioning Drill

The first drill to practice with this aim in mind involves three students, one playing the defender against two potential aggressors who will use verbal

role-playing with frequent attempts to get to the defender's blind side. The defender will counter with the above-described method, accompanied by strong verbal commands in an attempt to create a verbal boundary. No physical contact will take place, other than an occasional shove if one of the aggressors touches your lead fence hand. The sole purpose of this drill is to develop the priority positioning that will allow you to be proactive in controlling the situation. The participants rotate roles so that all get to practice defensive priority positioning.

Clinch and Relocate Position Drill 1: Footwork Only

This drill also requires three people and is worked from the same starting position as the last two-on-one scenario. This time you have not had the chance to attack first, and one of the subjects has made the first move against you. The aggressive action could come from either of them and could be an attempted shove, grab, or sucker punch. The thing to bear in mind is that as soon as the physical action starts, the second aggressor will attack immediately. Therefore, your response should be to drop your head and cover it by raising your arms as you rapidly close on one of the attackers, tying him up in a Thai-style neck clinch. The clinch can be on either the one who made the move toward you or the second guy, whomever you can get hold of first. From the clinch, you will zone away from the second aggressor, again placing yourself in a position from which you are dealing with one while watching the other.

This drill is performed as a progression by first practicing the footwork, clinching, and zoning away from the second guy who is attempting to get behind you. Zone away from both positions shown and then switch roles with your partners.

Working off the fence, clinch the neck of whoever is closest to you and zone away from the second aggressor so that you are dealing with one while looking at the other.

In real life, as soon as you zone to relocate your position, you would headbutt and knee the guy you are holding, but for this drill just zone away from the second man as he tries to close in on you. Repeat two or three times to get the hang of positioning.

Clinch and Relocate Position Drill 2: Add Striking

It is from this zoned position that you will be mauling your clinched subject with rapid head-butts, knees, and elbows the whole time he is in the clinch. From here, you shove him into the second subject in order to escape or re-engage. Pressure is added to the practice by having the aggressor, who is wearing boxing gloves or a pair of focus pads, throw all-out punches at your head. Cover your head and close for the clinch while throwing rapid shots into your clinched, body-armored aggressor. Zone away two or three times as you practice your verbal boundary and posturing skills: "Stay back! Stay where you f**king are!" Then shove one aggressor into the other and make good your escape.

2-on-1 Flanking Drill

Here you are facing two potentially hostile subjects, and escape and de-escalation are no longer options. A physical attack is imminent. The best advice here would be to be proactive. Move explosively to the outside of the closer subject, flanking him hard as you grab a limb.

"Headhunt" immediately with a good solid shot to the head. From this side-on position, the brain will bounce violently inside the skull. Your objective here is a solid knockout. Think, "impact with attitude!"

In my experience, I can tell you that when you drop the first fucker quickly, you are left with three possible responses from the second subject. (1) He will momentarily freeze like a deer in the headlights but will still be in range to hurt you.

(2) He gets his head on it. My advice here is to blitz him without delay, striking preemptively and following up as necessary. The second response is favored, but don't rely on it. Here he backs up like he's been tasered in the bollocks. In this case, reinforce his decision with strong physical and verbal boundaries as you extract yourself from the situation.

(3) When the second subject headhunts and attacks immediately (in which case he was going to anyway), cover your head and crash in!

From here, go straight to your close-quarter weapons and take him apart. Tactically, flanking has allowed you to go one on one, which is much better than two on one with you in the middle!

CHAPTER 8

STREET GRAPPLING

This is last resort stuff—if you have ended up on the ground with an assailant, then you have made a mistake and you will have to make the best out of a bad situation and quickly. In the worst-case scenario, when both your opponent and you have ended up on the ground, your priority is to get into a dominant position from which you can hurt your opponent and get back onto your feet as quickly as possible. There are many reasons why you should never get caught grappling if you can avoid it, but here are just three that come to mind.

First of all, if the person you are on the ground with has a weapon, a blade in particular, the first thing that you are likely to know is when it is sticking out of a part of your anatomy. Second, the chances are extremely high that the subject will have mates that will be only too eager to join in a game of let's kick his head off. In fact always assume that any potential aggressor is possibly armed and will most likely have accomplices. Last, but not least, is the environment. It will be a far cry from a nicely matted dojo. There may be broken glass, uneven curbs, dog shit, or who knows what else down there. It is not where you want to be—trust me on that.

Multiple puncture wounds could confirm your first inclination that your assailant has a weapon.

A common saying in self-defense circles is that 8 out of 10 fights will go to the ground, I don't necessarily agree with that. I believe if you have good awareness and a practiced game plan, most situations can be dealt with in a much more clinical way through the merits of preemption. But it is true to say that if neither combatant is down after the first or second blow, there is a good chance that it will go to vertical or stand-up grappling. It will end up that way out of sheer desperation due to the fact that neither will want to be hit and will grab hold in an attempt to close the other down and therefore take away his attacking capability. Vertical

grappling at extreme close quarters will be your last chance to finish the fight before it hits the ground. That's why it is vitally important that you become comfortable in this range. In fact, just before you both close to vertical grappling is what is often called trapping range. It is here that you can use your most effective body weapons: your headbutts, knees, and elbows. If the fight is not ended here, the range will quickly close and a push/pull manic struggle will ensue, followed by both combatants hitting the ground.

Once you hit the floor, you are in a horizontal grapple that will be both scary and exhausting particularly if you are in unfamiliar territory. In such a situation, you are most definitely not interested in the textbook arm bar technique, and the tap system simply does not exist. Here you need to gain as dominant a position as you can, and as quickly as you can, in order to inflict as much pain and injury as is necessary to allow you to get back to your feet and escape before anyone else gets involved. Here I have taken a few ideas from the old-time wrestler's illegal techniques, such as fish hooking the mouth and gouging the eyes. I have also drawn from the Filipino art of kina mutai, which, as you recall, is the art of biting, gouging, and tearing.

Before we deal with the ground grappling drills, let's look at a couple of other relevant aspects. First of all, the most common way that both combatants will end up on the ground is from the vertical grappling push/pull scenario I've already mentioned. One other way is when your aggressor actually attempts to take you to the ground by tackling your legs in a rugby-style takedown. This is a common attack, particularly if your opponent is big and strong, as he will usually prefer to utilize his superior weight and size by either taking you down via a tackle or by picking you up and slamming you to the ground with either a bear hug or some kind of headlock attack. That's why you should always strive to be preemptive, but if the worst happens and you have to react defensively to some kind of grab or hold, it is vital that you react with aggressive urgency because it will progress almost instantly to an attempt to force you into a position that will be less favorable for you, which will likely end with you on the ground.

Remember, a fight is a constantly moving struggle; nothing is static. If you can't avoid the fight, then act immediately. Refer to earlier chapters for dealing with common holds and grabs. For now, we will look at how to deal with the common double-leg takedown, or rugby tackle.

DEALING WITH A TACKLE/SINGLE-DOUBLE LEG TAKEDOWN: EXAMPLE 1

The way that we deal with the tackle will depend mainly on just how early we catch it. Bear in mind that most confrontational situations will start from less than two feet away; therefore, your reaction time is limited. Assuming that you see the tackle coming before contact is made, the counter we use is called sprawling. This is common to shoot wrestling and is done by sprawling back with both legs by simply un-weighting your feet and throwing both legs back and out of reach as you fall forward, catching yourself by landing with bent elbows onto your opponent's shoulders on either side of his head. You need to create an apex with your arms and use them to strike incidentally into the brachial plexus region of the neck as he comes in. From here, place one hand flat on the back of his head and drive him face-first into the ground, leaving you with the option to follow up with your feet and/or escape.

DEALING WITH A TACKLE/SINGLE-DOUBLE LEG TAKEDOWN: EXAMPLE 2

Here we will assume that the subject has caught your legs and you are on your way down to the ground. The first thing is to tuck your chin into your chest and take your hands straight to his head, with one hand holding the back of the head as the fingers of your other hand make straight for the eyes in a ripping and gouging motion.

This way, right from your very first action, you are hurting the subject and placing him on the defensive. From here, change the position of your hands so that you have one on his chin and the other on the back of his head. Twist the head in a fast-turning motion, as if turning a steering wheel. Rotate him off you to one side, leaving you with the option to either roll off in the opposite direction and escape or roll with him and take the mount position, thereby finishing the situation with basic strikes.

THE SNATCH TAKEDOWN

The ideal in any physical confrontation is for you to remain standing over your floored subject with you in complete control of the situation. This is why the main focus of what we teach at UC involves striking preemptively and following up until the threat is floored. One excellent method that will ensure this is a takedown from Greco-Roman wrestling called the "snatch." I have used this effectively in a number of live situations and it has never failed me. It comes into play if the person, for whatever reason, is still on his feet after your initial strike. As always in such a case, the first strike will precede a continuous attack that will usually involve using the head, knees, or elbows.

The snatch tends to work well after a knee strike to the groin from a Thai-style clinch, regardless of whether you land the strike or if he moves away just before your strike lands by throwing his hips back instinctively. He will still offer you the same response of bending forward by making his body pike. It is at this moment that you would use this energy to continue his forward momentum by snatching him straight down face-first into the floor via the back of his head, neck, or clothing. From here, you can move to his flank and slightly behind, which in itself is psychologically more dominating. You now have the option to finish with your feet with a volley to his face and/or escape.

Put in a knee strike from a Thai clinch, finishing with a snatch takedown. From here, you have the option to finish him with your feet or escape.

The snatch is a great skill for inflicting environmental damage. Snatching someone face-first into the floor speaks for itself, as does applying the same into a vertical structure such as a corner, an edge, or, as in this example, a wall!

PINNING FOR CONTROL

One way to get back on your feet as quickly as possible from a ground position is through the pin. There are a number of different ways in which to pin the subject in order to obtain a dominant position. In this text I will cover three pins: the scarf hold, mount, and cross side. Even those with absolutely no grappling experience or training may recall crude variations of the pins from their school days.

My first grappling experience was at the back of a school playing field, where you would often see two lads having a scrap to sort out their differences. In those days, all the kids would circle around to watch two boys fight, and most times both would end up on the ground in a frantic struggle for dominance, most likely ending up with an instinctive, crude variation of either the scarf hold or the mount.

Scarf Hold

This basically is a neck-and-head lock that is applied as you lie on your side next to your opponent, who's in a prone position. Place your right arm (left if working from the opposite side of the body) around the opponent's neck while he is lying on his back and then grab hold of either his clothing or your own right knee to secure the hold in place. Place his left arm under your left armpit and bring your right knee close to his face while your left leg sprawls out hurdler style behind you in order to provide you with a strong, secure base. Keep your own head low and bear in mind that from this position, as with all pins, you will be looking to strike and return to your feet as quickly as possible.

The scarf hold in action.

Mount

Here you are basically straddling the subject's belly or chest, sitting on him with all your weight as you grip tightly with your feet and legs. Of course, both the scarf hold and mount are merely a transition to allow you to finish the fight and escape. Therefore, once you are in the mount position, you are looking to attack quickly and finish, not to hold on for the duration.

Cross Side

As the name suggests, you are lying across the subject's body, momentarily pinning from a position of dominance before you can transition to an attack. In all cases, any of these positions of dominance appear only fleetingly before an attacking option is employed in order to get back to your feet ASAP!

Scarf to Mount to Cross-Side Drill

This drill is a progression. Start by holding a partner down in a left-side scarf hold. While staying close to your partner, quickly move to the mount position and then on to the right side cross-side hold. Make the transition into each position as smooth as possible. Once you have the drill down, have your partner stop being compliant and have him struggle against you. Build up to an all-out struggle and have your partner add aggressive verbalization, such as "Get the f**k off me!" This allows you to get a feel of just how different this feels to its sporting/competitive counterpart. In this drill, you've got to work hard to maintain dominance. In an unforgiving concrete environment, you will quickly realize why you do not want to end up on the ground on the street.

Top right, middle, and bottom. Stay tight and close and move swiftly from one pin to the next.

Striking from the Pin

Working from the above drill, start with the scarf hold. Your best options for hurting the subject and getting to your feet as quickly as possible—which is always your objective—are rapid multiple headbutts, multiple open-handed strikes with your free hand, eye gouges with the thumb of your free hand, and bites on the soft areas of the face, such as the nose, chin, lips, and eyebrows. From the mount, you are looking at fast multiple strikes, such as cycling hammer-fist blows, while you manipulate the head and face with the opposite hand by using an off-hand palm strike. Other options include multiple ax hand strikes to either side of the face and neck or crisscross straight punching, multiple elbows and headbutts, neck cranking, and environmental damage by smashing the head repeatedly on the floor.

Here are some examples of attacking offensively from the pins:

Gouge an eye and then repeatedly headbutt.

Bite the face and then crank the neck.

Repeatedly smash the head into the ground.

From the mount position, go straight to your guns and hit with cycling hammerfist strikes.

A neck crank and a floor smash follow.

Above left, bottom left and above. When the subject instinctively covers to guard, clear the arms to gain attachment and then cycle repeatedly.

Gouge both eyes.

From cross-side options, include kneeing the head and midline targets.

Elbow the face.

Bite soft-tissue targets.

ESCAPE FROM THE SCARF HOLD

If you find yourself caught in a scarf hold, your first priority should be to limit damage to yourself by covering your face. Then you reach over his head for the philtrum control under the nose, which will allow you to yank his head back, and as the saying goes, where the head goes, the body will follow. This action will pull him over and expose the throat for a strike, which will allow you to escape the hold.

Starting from the scarf hold position, reach over your opponent's head and grab under his nose. Next pull hard on the philtrum to force the head back and expose the throat for striking.

For the drill, once his head is back, you can manipulate your body free by "shrimping out" into a position from which you can execute the scarf hold. For practices, alternate roles with your partner.

ESCAPE FROM THE MOUNT

The most likely danger you will face if you are on your back with someone sitting on your chest in the mounted position is multiple punches to the head or the infamous "ground and pound." In this scenario, you are in danger of your subject striking and punching your head with his continuous attack from the dominant mount position. The priority here is to limit damage, so the first thing is to close your jaw tight, raise your head off the floor, and cover your face and head tightly with your hands and forearms. Keep your hands moving, as if you are vigorously washing your hair. Understand that it is very likely that you will take one or more shots, but if you get your head covered, you will limit the damage and impact.

The next thing to do is to brace your position by bringing both feet close to your backside and dropping both elbows into the groin area. Buck explosively upward with your hips, throwing your subject forward so that he has to catch himself on his hands or risk falling on his face.

This will bring him closer to you and allow you to grab hold of him and bring your face into his chest region, preferably the nipple area but whatever you can get. From here hold tight and bite uninterrupted as hard and vigorously as you can. Use the incisor cutting teeth at the side of your mouth and shake your head like a pit bull as you do so. Your subject's desperate reaction to this will be to distance himself from the source of pain as quickly as possible, so he will pull away from you. As he does so, use his momentum and shove him off with your hands or feet. Get back to your feet ASAP to re-engage or escape.

Cover your head and brace your feet close to your backside, and then drive both elbows explosively into the groin.

From here, thrust upward with your hips to buck your subject forward.

Grab hold of him and pull him in close as you climb up his body to his nipple line. From this uninterrupted position, bite down hard while vigorously shaking your head.

From here, you can finish off your attacker with your feet, or you can escape.

As he pulls away, push him off so that you can get back to your feet ASAP.

FIGHTING FROM THE FLOOR

It is important in your training that you cover every eventuality. In this case, we are talking worst- case scenario, where you are on the ground and the subject is still on his feet and baying for your blood. It may be that you have been knocked to the floor or that you have simply lost your footing and slipped. In either case, your priority is to get back up on your feet as quickly as possible.

Here we will be looking at several drills for teaching you how to fight from the floor. The first involves fending from the floor by resting, face up, on your elbows or hands and butt as you track your opponent, moving as he moves while kicking out manically at his lower legs with the heels of both feet.

Support your weight on both hands or lean slightly farther back onto both elbows. Be sure to track your target with your feet and kick out as soon as there's something to hit.

Fighting from the Floor, Drill 1

To practice this drill, have your training partner hold a strike shield low against his legs as he moves around you, trying to close in as you strive to keep him away by kicking out.

Take up the position shown, offering the bottoms of both feet to any target that presents itself. As your partner moves around you in all directions, track him with your feet until he closes, at which point you kick out to the shield with both feet. As an alternative to the pad, have your partner wear shin pads for protection and a full-face head guard as you strive for a stopping head shot. Make this a progression as you work up to an all-out scenario.

As soon as you create just enough space, get back up on your feet by rolling back and away from your partner. Maintain a good degree of visual awareness as you look all around you, 360 degrees. Work the drill for two minutes and then switch roles with your partner.

Fighting from the Floor, Drill 2

In this drill, we are assuming that you are down on one or both knees in front of the subject. Perhaps you have caught a sucker punch and must now regain the initiative, or you may have slipped and ended up on the ground. Have a partner hold a pad on the front of his thigh just above the knee and put in an elbow strike while pulling in on the back of the knee as the elbow strikes the pad. From here move the hand from the back of the knee down to the back of his ankle while the elbow-striking arm moves just below the front of his knee, jerking the joint backward as you pull forward on the ankle, taking him down to the ground. Get back to your feet and finish by stomping on your felled opponent's ankle.

Here you are on the ground with your opponent attacking your from above. You take him to the ground by jerking his knee backward while pulling his ankle forward.

Regaining the initiative from a kneeling position, land a heavy elbow strike to his thigh. Using a push-pull action with your arms, pull on the back of his ankle as you blast the thigh forward with your elbow strike and take the subject down to the ground. Get back to your feet quickly.

Finish the fight with your feet by stomping on his ankle.

CHAPTER 9

THE COMBATIVE USE OF IMPROVISED WEAPONS

In America unarmed combatives is really only considered for use as a last resort. For example, if you have no weapon and no less-than-lethal option available, then unarmed combatives may be used to buy you enough time to acquire a weapon or a less-than-lethal alternative. Look at law enforcement and executive protection professionals abroad, and you will find that the first line of protection is a chemical spray or a baton unless circumstances dictate the threat or use of lethal force, in which case a firearm would be drawn. For civilians in the United Kingdom, where I live, the rules of engagement are very different—we are not allowed to carry any purpose-designed weapon or anything adapted to be used for the sole purpose of a weapon. With that said, in dire circumstances where you feel that you are in danger for your life or safety, it is perfectly acceptable to use anything you can find as an improvised weapon in an emergency.

The key to using an improvised weapon is that it will be of use only if it is already available in your strong hand and is accompanied by an alert and switched-on state of awareness and the intention to use the weapon. A set of car or door keys can and should be held in your hand, ready to use in preparation to enter your car or house as quickly and efficiently as possible, accompanied by a good sense of awareness. This should be considered street-smart self-protection. For example, a woman is returning to her car after a hard day at the office, and the environment has changed since she parked earlier that morning in that it is now dark and the parking lot is somewhat deserted. She should be holding her keys in her strong hand, ready to be to be used for slashing or stabbing. If an attacker approaches, her first response should be to use the keys as a weapon.

There are many everyday items that could be used as improvised weapons. The main items we

Shown is an array of improvised weapons: a coin wallet, a tactical pen, cell phone, keys, a rock, and a beer bottle. The first four items could be everyday personal carry tools, whereas the rock and the bottle would be considered tools of opportunity.

are going to cover in this book are keys, pens, and cell phones, any of which could come in very handy if you find yourself needing an equalizer. The thing to remember about the items mentioned is that they are not weapons by design nor have they been converted in any way to be used as a weapon, but they could be used should the need arise.

KEYS

Keys can be used in a variety of ways, but for this example we are going to use a single key in a simple manner in order to keep things simple. I got this method of using a single key from Kelly McCann, and you can refer to it in his excellent instructional video *Minimum Damage, Maximum Effect*, available from Paladin Press. This method requires a single car key or Yale-type door key that is held along the index finger of your stronger hand with no more than half an inch of the end protruding, which is trapped in place with the thumb. From here, the weapon can be used in a slashing and stabbing fashion to the soft target areas of the face, throat, and groin.

The proper way to hold a key in a defensive posture.

Key Sequence

This sequence is employed from a very natural and unobtrusive position of preparation: hold the key in your dominant hand, as you normally would.

Preemptive weapon/tool access is the most important factor here; otherwise the skill is redundant.

The best tactic here is to "stun and run." As soon as you trigger that recoiling defensive reflex, take off!

Employ a short, sharp stab/slash to a soft facial target, aiming in the general direction of an eye.

Understand that if escape is impossible, you must be prepared to follow up immediately. As when using any weapon of opportunity, you can repeat the technique, as well as integrating with your hard skill strikes.

In this next example of using a key as an improvised weapon, an array of slash and stabs to the facial area can be followed up with a good spike kick to the groin, employing the high-low principle as just one example.

VARIOUS GRIPS

Below are various grips being used to hold improvised weapons.

The hammer grip applied to a cell phone, pen, and rock.

Pen

A pen can be applied in various ways for striking and creating intense pain using either the pointing or hammer grip. The following photos illustrate several examples.

The pointing grip used to wield a pen as an improvised weapon.

Here a tactical pen held in the hammer grip is used to escape extreme close quarters by jamming it into a soft-tissue target, creating pain and distance for a more impactful follow-up if need be!

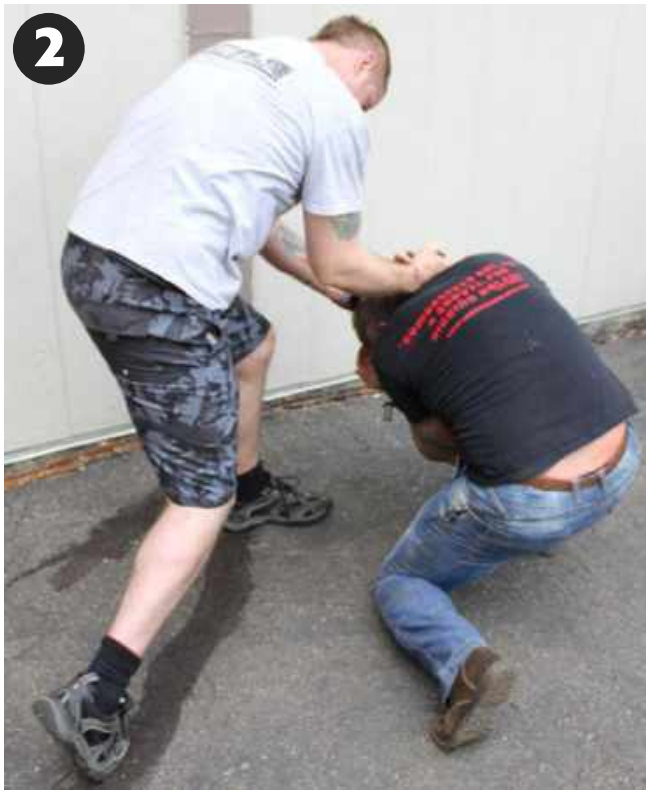
Effect a quick release from extreme close quarters by ramming the point of this sharp pen straight up the nose.

Apply the pointing grip under the chin to get the head back sharply. This will take your attacker's attention upward and off a good hard knee to the groin as your follow-up.

Stabbing the pen sharply down onto the hand to release a grip and then following up with a nice, fast headbutt will put you in a good position to end this situation, following up with a strike if needed.

Cell Phone Sequence

In this sequence we are taking our basic gross motor strikes and applying them to an improvised weapon: a cell phone. Use a fast, linear strike with the top edge of the phone into the throat or face.



Use the bottom edge of the phone for a series of cycling (hammer-fist) strikes until the threat is eliminated. Note that both of these sequences can flow together from one to the other.

Stool

In this sequence, we can see how a stool or chair can be used as a barrier against an attempted edged-weapon attack, which could be with a knife or a broken bottle. The legs of the stool can be thrust at your attacker's throat and groin by angling the chair accordingly.

Using a stool as a barrier between you and an edged weapon. Angle the stool and thrust out at your assailant if he attempts to close on you.

CHAPTER 10

IMPACT DELIVERY FOR PREEMPTIVE STRIKING

The most important factor relating to striking—next to actually being first and ferocious—is the delivery of impact. It's all very well getting your shot in before the other guy, but it's no good if your strike lacks power and is ineffective. The objective of your preemptive strike (if no other option exists) is to hit first and get away, thereby ending the situation quickly by preventing further physical response. Of course, if that one shot is not enough, it becomes the first strike of a continuous attack until the threat is over. The aim is to hit your subject hard enough to either knock him out or knock him down. At the very least, we want to completely readjust his attitude so that he then becomes less committed to continuing the attack.

The following two concepts, the waist twist and the drop step, are basically two sides of the same coin. Both methods incorporate dropping your body weight behind your strike to maximize impact.

The first technique involves the twisting of the waist as you move in the direction of your strike. This comes into play with most rear-hand strikes. Impact power is delivered to your strikes and punches by using a combination of this waist twist along with what's called the "drop step" or the "falling step." The late, great boxing champion Jack Dempsey developed this concept. It is basically a method that allows you to drop your body weight behind your punch/strike to give it knockout power. Instead of providing step-by-step instruction in how to perform the drop step, I will quote from a conversation that Dempsey had with a sports writer just before his famous fight with another great boxer of that era, Gene Tunney. Dempsey described his use of the drop step applied to a straight left punch, what he called his left jolt:

> *"Once inside the ring, you start the fight by pointing your left great toe toward the target and then taking a long, falling step toward the target while simultaneously shooting a half-opened left shot. Then, as the relaxed left hand speeds towards the target, suddenly close the hand with a convulsive grabbing snap. Make that work, and the other fellow should drop like a pole-axed steer."*

This quote describes it better than I ever could. The point to grasp is the explosive step forward that allows your entire body weight to fall behind whatever strike you favor.

"Learn to hit f**king hard!" Geoff Thompson.

While most strikes will bring into play both the waist twist and the drop step to give them power, some require more from one method than the other. For example, a cupped hand slap off the rear hand will acquire its power from approximately 25 percent drop step and 75 percent twisting action of the waist as you move in the direction of your strike, taking your body weight through the target, whereas the hammerfist blow from a hands-held-high kind of fence will acquire up to 75 percent from dropping your body weight forward (drop step) and only 25 percent from the twisting action of the waist. It is important to have a complete grasp of both of these methods for maximum impact delivery.

PREEMPTIVE STRIKING

"Understand that most of the time if you wait for final confirmation that you're going to be assaulted, it will come in the form of injury to you."
—Kelly McCann

The Ideal

Forgive my repetition here. As emphasized throughout this book, if there is no chance to avoid or escape a confrontation and you can't talk your way out and your instincts tell you that a physical attack is imminent, your only option is to strike preemptively. The ideal is to hit first, fast, and so hard that you either knock out your assailant,

knock him down, or change his mind about wanting any part of the physical side of you. Either of these options will create the opportunity for you to escape, which you should do without delay.

If the situation has reached a point where a physical response is all that separates you from getting viciously assaulted and putting a clinical end to the situation so that you can escape unharmed, then don't think twice about it. Unleash your well-practiced, main artillery preemptive strike with 100 percent all-out commitment and intention, and then get out of there as soon as possible.

The Law

The law in most places states that you may use reasonable force to defend yourself. However, what constitutes reasonable force and under what circumstances you may use it is open to discussion and may have to be decided by the courts. *It is your responsibility to know the applicable laws where you live.*

1. You have every right to use reasonable force to defend yourself against an unlawful attack.
2. You are equally entitled to use reasonable force to prevent an unlawful attack on yourself, your family, or your property.
3. Under Criminal Act 1967 in the United Kingdom, you can use reasonable force to prevent an unlawful attack on anyone.
4. The claim of self-defense is valid if the defendant genuinely believed that he was being attacked or was in imminent danger of attack and the response was proportionate to the perceived threat.
5. If you are attacked, the courts will not expect you to calculate an exact amount of reasonable force.
6. If you perceive you are threatened, you are entitled to act in self-defense and not be penalized by the courts: "If the defendant makes a genuine mistake about the existence of a threat, he is entitled to rely on self-defense as a defense even if no threat actually existed."
7. By law you do not have to wait for the first blow: A defendant need not wait until he (or she) is struck before using force in his defense; as long as he has the "honest belief" that he is about to be assaulted and/or his life is in danger. The court of appeals has ruled that a defendant is entitled to use self-defense by striking his assailant before he is struck; and in exceptional circumstances, arm himself against an expected imminent attack.
8. Although you are expected to show reasonable restraint, as a matter of law you are not obliged to retreat or show unwillingness to fight.
9. The law does not give a person permission to beat up someone. A defendant's actions must be proportionate to the perceived threat (which is difficult to perceive under adrenal stress), but there are two key things to determine here. First, was what you did *necessary* under the circumstances, or could you have escaped? If you could have escaped, you should have. If the subject arrested your movement and would not let you leave, as long as imminent assault was perceived, then it was indeed necessary. Second, was your use of force in terms of physical response *reasonable*? In other words, you should employ a physical response that will allow you to end the situation without further harm and no more. As soon as the threat subsides or the opportunity to escape presents itself, you must halt your response. It is most certainly *not* about retribution.
10. If the attack could be lethal, then the defendant is entitled to use extreme violence.
11. If a defendant is under attack and reaches for the first available object, the use of that object will likely be deemed as reasonable. Everyday items such as pens, keys, and rolled-up magazines can be used against an attacker.
12. In some places, it is illegal to carry anything that could be described as an offensive weapon.

Point number 7 is most relevant to the discussion of preemption. The law also clearly states that if an antagonist is aggressive and moving forward in a manner that makes you fear for your safety, you can preemptively strike in self-defense. The key point here is that you genuinely feared for your safety and you had the honest belief that your life was in danger both from a legal and moral perspective.

SELECTION OF EFFECTIVE STRIKES

"The firstest with the mostest is the bestest."
—Dan Inosanto

The strikes we use in UC can be found in most martial arts and combative systems. There are a variety of strikes in the UC curriculum that utilize all your body's natural weapons—including open hands, closed fists, head, elbows, knees, and feet—and can be used in a variety of situations. The important thing to understand here is that we are not simply accumulating techniques. You want to become competent in using all your natural weapons in a variety of ways, but then you should select the one or two strikes that work best for you and train them beyond the point of unconscious competence until they become a natural part of your being.

You do this by prioritizing them in your training above all else. You practice thousands of strikes on impactive equipment over a long period. You then make your favorite technique/s your main artillery preemptive strike that then fits neatly into your game plan for situations in which preemption becomes your only available option.

OPEN-HAND STRIKES

I tend to favor open-hand strikes over closed-fist punching, although I think that both methods have their place. Please note that as soon as you have grasped an understanding of how each of the strikes is performed, from the very beginning you are encouraged to incorporate principles of the advanced learning methods from neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), as discussed earlier. An example of this would be to visualize something in your mind, before each strike is delivered, that will help you to access the fight state of mind—in other words, to help summon a controlled explosion of aggression. This may require a little practice, but it can be achieved. What you visualize to bring about this state of mind is up to you, but when you feel it, strive to harness the feeling and anchor it to the strike/s you practice on the pads. So now, rather than just going through the motions, you are encouraged to use every physical and emotional fiber of your being, thus enabling you to strike with bad intentions. This is what is meant by "emotional content."

Chin Jab

This was one of the primary attacking tools of World War II combatives. It is similar to the palm-heel strike found in many Asian martial arts. The difference with the chin jab is in the formation of the hand and the body mechanics with which it is delivered. To form the correct hand position, imagine that you are holding a grapefruit in your hand with your fingers spread apart and curled inward; this makes the hand into a platform for your target, which, in this case, is the chin and jawbone. Deliver the strike straight up the centerline of your opponent, hitting directly under the chin with the heel of your hand from underneath his peripheral vision.

The chin jab strike comes straight up under the chin as you check the aggressor's arm, driving the head back, with the option to follow up into the eyes with your clawed finger.

Method of Practice

The chin jab is performed in much the same way as a boxing upper cut. Keep a slight bend in your legs as you drop-step forward and slightly to your opponent's side. At the same time, you check the back of his upper arm for control and explosively straighten the legs as you throw the chin jab. Keep your striking forearm close to your own body as you strike. Perform the step, arm check, and strike simultaneously as your foot lands, delivering body weight behind your strike. As with all the strikes, you aim to deliver the impact *through* your target.

Here we see the chin jab in application from an overhead frontal view, with the strike.

Cupped-Hand Blow

This is basically an open-hand slap that can be used in a variety of ways. The slight cupping of the hand is achieved by allowing the fingers and thumb to stay together in a relaxed curve. This cupping action magnifies the impact of the strike. The target area is the entire side of the head. The ear and the side of the neck are particularly vulnerable targets, but anywhere on the side of the face will produce a deep shock force to the central nervous system. This is due to the impact received by the large number of nerve endings in the facial area. This strike can also be thrown simultaneously with both hands. Deliver the blow to both ears or to both sides of your assailant's neck. The cupped-hand blow can also be delivered to the groin, striking in a multiple fashion as you check the arm to maintain control.

The cupped-hand blow employed to the ear.

Method of Practice

The single strike can be thrown from a variety of natural stances; an example would be to maintain range with your left-lead fence hand while keeping your right striking hand down by your side. From here, take a slight step forward and to the left with your forward foot, moving you in the direction of the strike. As you do this, whip in your right-side hip just before you swing your cupped hand in a short, loose arc to your selected target. This will create slight recoil from the shoulder, allowing full body weight to accompany your strike.

From a natural position that allows you to control the space between you and your potential subject, simply throw the cupped-hand blow from the side of your hip straight to the target, allowing your body to move in the direction of the strike by whipping in your hips just before the blow lands. To perform the strike from a shorter-range, hands-held-high kind of fence, simply step the same way as described above as you rotate your trunk sharply to the left while maintaining your hands in the high bent-arm position. The sharp turn of your upper body with allow you to impact through your target with your cupped hand.

Double Slap

The double slap is also known as the double-ear-box strike. This strike can be thrown from a hands-down-by-your-sides position straight to the target, which is basically both sides of his head, including the ears. This is, of course, the higher level of the force option, as your opponent's equilibrium will be destroyed and damage to one or both eardrums is likely to occur. This will feel like a bomb is going off in his head.

An alternative target is to strike both sides of his neck. This latter option is the preferred method of UK self-protection expert Jamie O'Keefe. If you throw the strike from a fence, you will need to cock your hands slightly before you strike. The best way to disguise this setup is to turn your palms out slightly as if talking in exclamation. You simply ask the subject a brain-engaging question that will also act as a trigger for your attack. This will eliminate any indecision of when to strike on your part. This is just one way of employing artifice (deception) and is a good tactic to use with all your strikes. This kind of ploy should be brought into play when you practice your striking on impact equipment.

The double slap is best set up by using dialogue as a distraction. Ask your opponent a question and use your hands to signal your agitation: "Look, mate, what's this about?" BAM.

Groin Slap

Perform the groin slap by using the same footwork and arm check as employed for the chin jab. Step forward and slightly to the left as you grab the back of your subject's upper arm and employ a fast slap up and under the fork between your opponent's legs, impacting his groin hard multiple times. You put in three slaps with forward pressure using a short pendulum swing while snapping in your hips behind each shot for maximum impact behind each slapping strike.

Deliver the groin slap hard and fast multiple times.

Ax Hand Blow

The ax hand blow is also known as the edge of hand blow and the chop. This is another major weapon used in combatives and can also be found in traditional karate and some styles of Chinese kung fu, among other martial arts.

From a natural position, explode forward and trap the arm as you strike your target without chambering your hands in any way. Follow up with further strikes. If necessary, there is the opportunity to follow up with further strikes from this position, turning your body into each one. This is what's referred to as a long ax hand and is powered by a combination of drop step and body torque.

The ax hand blow can be very effective when delivered properly.

Method of Practice

To create an ax hand, simply extend your fingers and keep them together, and then extend your thumb, which will prevent your hand from cupping on impact. The ax hand employs the entire surface area from the edge of the hand along the ulna edge of the forearm to just below the elbow as a striking weapon. It can be used to strike in a variety of ways to a variety of targets, primarily the throat, sides and back of the neck, under the nose, bridge of the nose, and forearms and wrists.

A short ax hand to the windpipe area of the throat. This strike is delivered in more of a short, straight line from wherever your hands happen to be, straight into the target, and is as always accompanied by a drop step that incorporates your full body weight behind the strike.

This photo depicts the same strike up under the chin from a seated position.

Palm Strike

A palm strike is basically a clawed-hand palm strike and is also known as the tiger's claw. To deliver this strike, hold your hand as if holding a grapefruit. You can deliver the strike in one of two ways. The first way is in a piston-like motion, similar to the way it was delivered by W.E. Fairbairn, who was quoted as saying that, as a frontal attack, the tiger's claw is the most logical strike ever devised. The target for a frontal attack, as suggested by Fairbairn, is the general jaw and facial area, impacting hard with a clawed palm heel and leaving the eyes as an incidental secondary target. With that said, your goal for this piston-like strike should be to simply shake the brain through maximum impact—therefore, anywhere around the head and skull will make a suitable target area.

The straight piston-like strike is similar to one taught by W.E. Fairbairn.

Regardless of the method employed, make the correct formation of the wrist and hand, striking the target with the hard palm heel. The second method that is worth a mention here is the use of a very short-range clawed palm into the face, in conjunction with a short, sharp neck slap from behind, thereby leaving a slight "half beat" between each in order to get the double tap or "Styer's beat" effect.

Both methods have merit, but I personally like the piston-style better, and I like to use it as a multiple strike by first striking with my strong rear hand and following up by closing on my opponent in order to clinch with him using my off hand to prevent his retreat. I follow this by pumping two to three further strikes into my target while maintaining my grip and using forward pressure. My thinking here is to hit hard, harder, hardest as I move forward replacing my aggressor's footsteps with my own. As far as clinching is concerned, it really doesn't matter what I grab: his shoulder, the back of his head, or even his clothing—all work fine as long as I can grip him and prevent his retreat.

This is a great method to use as a preemptive attack, which will only cease when the man is down, or as a reaction to a straight punch, after which you would strive to cover, clear his arm, and counter with multiple piston strikes while maintaining your grip on whatever's available.

This strike works very well from a tight range—think inside a phone box and you will get the idea!

Strike with the fist palm strike off the fence, then close to grab, and continue to fire in multiple strikes until the man is down. The aim is to replace his footsteps with your own.

Hammerfist Strike/Cycling

From a hands-high fence, this strike involves smashing downward onto the target with the bottom meaty edge of your closed fist. The fist is brought down and through the target in one explosive movement, as you drop your body weight and step into the strike. Use the feeling of maintaining pressure through the target, as if trying to bring your fist down to meet your own knee. I like to use my other hand to check the person, as this prevents him from getting away from me, allowing the opportunity to follow up.

Recommended frontal targets include the point of the chin, which provides a great knockout shot that will really shake the brain, and also the top of the nose or the collarbone, which is probably the easiest bone to break in the body. For the head targets you can check and pull on the back of your subject's head with your free hand as you strike down onto your target with the hammerfist. This will cause a collision and increase the impact using the half beat idea previously mentioned. The check hand pulls on the shoulder when striking down onto the collarbone.

From a hands-high fence, explode forward as you check the arm, shoulder, or head, and hammerfist down and through your target.

Method of Practice

A good follow-up from the hammerfist is the chin jab followed by a knee strike, or you can just continue the attack with additional hammerfist strikes, manipulating your target with your checking hand. The latter method is called "cycling." One example would be to use a lead-hand palm strike straight into any available target and follow with a hammerfist strike. Continue the sequence as you manipulate your opponent's head with your off hand and continue to strike with the rear hammerfist, using both hands in a cycling fashion. For example, your first strike hits your opponent's face, making him turn away or bend over, in which case your off hand would go straight to the back of the head. This would allow you to manipulate him into place for a strike with your hammerfist to the back of the head/neck, kidney, or spinal area.

Above: From a nonaggressive fence, throw two cycling off-hand palm strikes claws to hammerfist strikes.

Right: Be sure to use maximum aggression and forward pressure.

Opposite page: Cycling should be practiced with a partner holding a shield. As you strike in a series of three to five attacks, your thinking should be, hard, harder, hardest!

1
2
3
4
5
6

The same series of multiple cycling attacks can be applied with the use of an improvised weapon, such as a pen, TV remote, or cell phone (shown).

Headbutt

The head tends to be used as a close-quarter weapon to follow up a strike from the clinch. This way you create the head-on collision effect: as both your hands grab the back of your opponent's neck and pull his face sharply onto the top of your head, you drop-step forward with your headbutt.

The head can also be used as your primary pre-emptive strike with or without the support of your hands to pull. It works well from a hands-held-high fence, as you drop-step forward, propelling your body toward your opponent, forcing your head to follow in a whip-like fashion through the target. You should aim just below your subject's eye line, the nose being the most favored target. Be sure to use the area from your hairline to the top of your head as a surface for striking. Of course, you can use the head to strike in a variety of ways, depending on your position relative to your subject.

Grab the back of the head/neck area of your opponent with one hand on top of the other. Then pull with a sudden jerk as you drop your chin and lurch forward with the top of your head. Both movements are performed simultaneously as you impact the face.

Elbow Strike

The elbow can be used from a variety of angles to strike a variety of target areas. As a preemptive strike, we will stick with just one simple method of delivery. The elbow is basically a close-quarter weapon and is most often used as a follow-up tool. With that said, it is also favored by many as a main artillery strike.

Method of Practice

To use it from a hands-held-high, subservient kind of fence, simply drop step forward as you articulate the tip of your rear elbow up and down onto your target with a muay Thai style, slashing motion. The elbow strike is made even more effective if you use your lead fence hand to clinch and pull on the back of your opponent's head or neck.

From here, you can jerk your assailant forward onto your advancing elbow, creating a head-on collision effect, which will maximize the impact of the strike. Target areas for the elbow depend on the level of threat with which you are dealing. If this is your weapon of choice, you need to realize just how damaging a point of the elbow strike with your full body weight behind it can be. A full-on strike to the chest, shoulder, or biceps area of the upper arm can have a great disabling effect and completely shut down one side of your assailant's body.

Target areas for the head can be anywhere from the temple to the side of the neck, including the nose, cheekbones, orbital sockets, and jaw. An elbow strike anywhere on the head will shake the recipient's brain, which should be your objective. A full body weight shot to any of these areas is going to cause some serious damage.

A better option might be to rake the elbow across the face rather than go for the full-on power shot. Then again, if the situation is severe enough and the danger to you is great, don't think twice about it—you may only get one shot, so make it count. The other thing to consider is that the majority of people who find themselves in such high-stress situations will find that their decision-making capabilities have been severely impaired, making the action of actually selecting a target before the strike practically nonexistent. In that case, I suggest that once in range you simply throw the strike, lift the tip of your elbow, and slash downward in the general direction of the apex between the side of the head and the shoulder. If you do this, you should achieve the desired effect.

From a nonaggressive fence, rapidly shift to an elbow strike.

Here the elbows are employed as a wheeling attack, very similar to the way John Styers, author of the classic *Cold Steel*, taught it in the 1950s. A fast lead palm is followed by a slashing elbow, an ax hand, and a rear-slashing elbow. Employ the sequence with constant offensive forward pressure.

Spiked Elbow

Another way in which we can use the elbow from a fence position is to spike straight into the face or center of body mass with the point of the elbow. Here the strike is employed as a battering ram and can be very effective to create space if you are encroached upon or as a starter before attachment and additional strikes.

Place your lead hand tight behind your head, as shown, keeping your biceps close to your cheek. Bring your right hand in front of your face to guard and then spear forward with a drop step into and through your target.

Knee Strike

The knee is most frequently used as a follow-up strike from an upright Thai boxing–style clinch. Simply grab the back of your opponent's head/neck and fire in multiple rapid knee strikes using the same knee or alternate knees into the groin, which is the favored target of choice. Other targets include the thighs, lower abdomen, ribs, and, in some cases, the head, which would be pulled down onto your rapidly rising knee strike. Of course if the opportunity presents itself for a quick and powerful knee strike into the groin as your initial preemptive attack, then seize the opportunity to land this fight-stopping shot without haste, either by grabbing the neck as mentioned or by simply taking a short drop step forward followed by exploding upward with the opposite knee, straight in and through the target.

This is what Kelly McCann calls "walking violently."

To walk violently, simply explode forward and into your opponent's low line with the knee strike; your aim is to replace his footsteps with your own.

Here is an example of the knee strike from a side-on clinch position.

Spike Kick

The spike kick is basically a toe punt kick, straight up into the pubic bone, striking the groin with the tip of your shoe. From a hands-held-high fence, the kick is executed off either the rear or lead foot with the leg held so that your thigh and shin form a fixed 90-degree angle. The kick is not levered from the knee like a traditional snap kick. Instead the whole leg is whipped straight up by lifting the point of your toe straight up and under the groin.

Often we will employ the high-low principle in this scenario, taking the subject's attention up with a deceptive verbal and visual gesture, such as, 'What's up, mate?' This will momentarily engage the subject's brain and take his attention upward, giving you the opportunity to kick his testicles up into his throat via an immediate, explosive spike kick to the low line.

Although the kick is not chambered in any way, it is preceded by a slight step forward with the nonkicking leg. Use a slight step forward with the lead foot when kicking off the rear leg and a slight step forward with the rear foot when kicking off the lead leg. This allows you to "unweight" your feet for a fast delivery.

Shin Kick

The shin kick is delivered by taking a slight step forward with your nonkicking leg followed by stomping forward and slightly downward with the inside boot edge of your kicking foot. The kick is aimed at the subject's shin anywhere from just above the ankle to just below the kneecap. The purpose of the slight step preceding the kick is to allow you to get body weight and momentum behind it.

Performed correctly, the shin kick will quite literally either blow the subject's legs out from under him or severely hyperextend his knee, resulting in a fight-stopping injury.

This sequence shows an example of the shin kick used by a female victim to counter a hair grab. Place both hands on top of the subject's hand to trap it in place. From here, smash the inside edge of your boot straight into his shinbone, being sure to drop body weight and stomp through the target.

Foot Stomps

Foot stomps are employed whenever your assailant is floored. If the situation dictates that the fight be taken to a complete conclusion in order to provide your only means of escape, then finishing with your feet might seem advisable. However, I strongly advise against stamping on your opponent's head for a couple of reasons. First of all, the consequences of stamping on someone's face and head, which is already flat against the ground, could well be lethal. In my time working on the doors, I witnessed the result of such actions more times than I care to remember.

To be honest, I have kicked people in the face after flooring them, but only when the threat dictated such action. But as far as stomping goes, you really don't need to target the head to secure a good result. Instead, I recommend that you target the limbs, in particular the ankle, if the situation dictates that you have to put this man down; keep him down and then stomp the ankle with all your body weight behind it to finish the job. If he can't stand, he can't follow.

"I don't care what drugs he's taken; if I stamp that leg out, he's got to crawl to catch me!"
—Den Brinkley, leading close-combat authority

Take a slight step forward and then stomp down and through your opponent's shinbone.

CHAPTER 11

CONTINUOUS ATTACK SEQUENCES

"Prepare for the Terminator and everyone else will pale in comparison!"

—Richard Dimitri

Any preemptive strike should be intended as the first of a continuous barrage of strikes that overwhelms the subject until he is either unconscious or, at the very least, no longer combative in attitude! This action is backed up with aggressive forward pressure that will allow you to replace your subject's footsteps with your own. The objective is to create a complete role reversal in your subject's thinking, taking him from predator to prey. Never assume that one strike will finish the fight; just keep attacking until the threat is eliminated. Of course, the ideal is to land a preemptive strike hard enough to create the opportunity to escape, but you must always be fully prepared to employ a continuous attack and to keep on attacking until the man is down. This is your contingency plan for the "what if factor":

- What if my first shot misses its target?
- What if my strike lands but only staggers him slightly?
- What if he's a tough bastard and is still coming forward?
- What if we end up in a clinch or, to use a more applicable term, "a stifled tangle?"

In all the above scenarios, the counter is always to attack first and keep attacking until there is no more threat. You must train your priority preemptive strike both in isolation and as part of a continuous barrage of blows that will flow together seamlessly in combination designed to overwhelm the subject both physically and mentally. As soon as you make the conscious decision to attack first, the idea is that you are now switching roles with your subject: you go from potential prey to predator. Destroy his balance by occupying his ground through the forward pressure of your assault. One shot may well be all that it takes, but never assume that it will by stopping to check out your handiwork. Instead you must always be prepared to continue until it's over.

We use the following methods in UC to practice continuous attack sequences. They are simply a variety of strikes chained together into a logical flow. They are not set patterns or fixed in stone; they are simply a learning method for applying our tools that can be interchanged as the student sees fit. How you use them will depend on a number of variables, including what best suits your body type, the available open targets, and how the subject reacts to the preceding strikes.

COMBINED ATTACKS

A multiple striking attack could be any combination of strikes chained together and applied with forward pressure. The object is not to practice set patterns but rather to learn to flow your strikes in a logical sequence that feels right to you but also has the flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing energy offered by a resisting opponent. Here are just a few examples to consider.

1. Lead ax hand to rear chin jab followed by an elbow strike
2. Lead spiking elbow to a rear elbow, side clinch to knee to cycling hammerfist blows.
3. Thunderclap to headbutt, knee to groin, and snatch to the ground.

As you can see, any number of combinations is possible. Just bear in mind the variables already mentioned and remember that a fight by its very nature is an ever-changing, fast-moving struggle. Therefore, learning how to flow and adapt instantly as the situation changes is obviously an asset you should strive to acquire. Just take the continuous-attack principle into account: preemptively strike the subject in the head as a starter, then gain attachment to him, and keep attacking with the closest weapon to the most available target until the threat subsides.

Continuous Attack Sequence, Example One

Preempt on the first pre-threat cue with a lead short ax hand to the high line and then gain attachment and fire in a rear chin jab.

Follow up with repeated elbows if the threat remains.

Continuous Attack Sequence, Example Two

Spike in with a lead elbow as your starter, gain attachment to your attacker, and then fire a rear elbow into him.

Once you're attached to your subject, apply the high-low principle by firing a knee into the low line.

Continue with cycling hammerfists to beat the subject down to the ground.

A limb stomp brings the attack to an end.

NOTE: Understand that the continuous-attack sequences shown here merely demonstrate how you might loop a logical sequence of blows together into a seamless flow. In terms of use of force, the level of threat you're facing would dictate the level of force employed. In combatives we train for the worst-case scenario, where there is a real possibility of threat to life. In combatives we train with the violence volume dial at ten. If the threat you face turns out to be a seven, then you can dial back your combative response. However, if you only train for seven and encounter a ten, then you're going to have a much harder time catching up, period. In other words, it's better to have the response trained and ingrained and not need it than to need it and not have it.

Here the pre-threat assault cue is obvious and escape/de-escalation is not an option. It's time to be the hammer or the anvil.

From a submissive, hands-high fence, you fire in a double slap to the high line.

Once you have gained attachment, drive a headbutt into the subject's face.

Follow immediately with a knee to the low line.

Snatch the subject to the ground, which allows you to inflict further damage by using the surrounding environment.

This puts an end to the situation quickly, making escape possible and further follow-up unnecessary.

CHAPTER 12

SITUATIONAL COMBATIVES AGAINST COMMON ATTACKS

This chapter deals with the "what if factor"—what if I'm caught unaware and have to react to some kind of attack from a subject? This is what you call situational combatives. As with all my instructional material—whether books, videos, or articles—please look at everything and absorb what is useful for you. The thing to understand straight off the bat is finding yourself in a situation in which you have to *react* to something your opponent has done to you puts you at a disadvantage. The fact is, action will always beat reaction and a preemptive response will always remain the better option if escape is not possible. The fact that you are in a situation in which you have to react indicates that you have been caught off guard and at a low level of awareness, in which case any assault on your person will now be classed as an ambush attack. In such a scenario, the adage "how you train is how you will fight" definitely applies. Therefore, it is essential that you address such problems in your training.

To keep things simple—simple being the only thing that works in a live situation—I am going to deal with a variety of the most common primary attacks that an untrained aggressor is likely to use. You don't need to bog yourself down with a huge variety of defenses, as there are really only a few practical possibilities. The first of these is the classic haymaker, or big right-hand angular punching attack. Most people are right-handed, although we will also train for the left-handed attack. The thing to understand is that, although this is a common method of punching, it is the line or angle of attack that concerns us, regardless of whether the attack itself is an unarmed punch or a weapon such as a bottle, stick, or blade is involved. The angle is the same. This is what Paul Vunak refers to as line familiarization.

Situational combatives requires a working knowledge of Hick's law, which refers to the number of choices available and how they affect response time. If you practice four or five different responses to one particular attack, then when the time comes to put your response into action there will be a significant time delay as your brain attempts to select the required response to fit the situation. This lost time will make all the difference. Hick's law has shown us that if we have just one well-trained response to a particular stimulus, then response time will be almost instantaneous. If you increase your choices to two, response time will increase slightly. Add several more choices, and you create indecision and delay, or what Peter

Consterdine calls a "log jam." So to keep things as simple as possible, we are going to train no more than two responses to each situation, making both adaptable should the need arise.

ANGULAR ATTACK

The following photos depict some examples of an angular attack:

Same angle punch with a bottle.

A haymaker punch is an example of an angular attack.

An angular attack with a brick.

An angular attack with an edged weapon.

There are certain things to consider when reacting to an angular attack. The first point is that each of us has a built-in flinch response. Think back to a time when a loud bang made you jump or when you were a kid and your mom or dad went to give you a clip around the ear. I guarantee that if you had even the slightest inclination that it was coming, the first thing you instinctively did was to drop your head and raise your arms to protect your neck, head, and face. This is the flinch response.

The second thing to bear in mind is that the most dangerous phase of any angular attack, regardless of the weapon at the end of it, is the hand or weapon part, as this is the fastest-moving part of the angle and where it has gained the most velocity. Armed with this knowledge, it makes sense that this is not where you want to be when the swing makes its full extension. Since you will *always* react with the flinch response, your best course of action is to train this response into a forward-moving motion that will allow you to get inside the arc of the attack and jam it before it picks up maximum speed and power. Once you are inside the arc, the weapon is behind you and no longer an immediate threat. You have now closed down your assailant and placed yourself at close quarters, from which you can finish the fight quickly with your most destructive natural bodily tools.

Method of Practice

As soon as you anticipate the angle of attack—in this case, a right-handed swing—step in and raise your left arm, keeping the elbow on your centerline as if to spike the subject in the shoulder with the tip of your elbow. Your arm is now bent, with your left hand placed by your left ear. You should now be well inside the line of attack, with the subject's weapon hand behind you. Your right hand is up and in a monitoring position, which will allow you to check anything coming in, and is cocked and ready to strike.

In this case, you are going to use a diagonal elbow smash into the face as you pull the head onto the strike at the same time with the opposite hand. From here, you can follow up with a variety of strikes. One example would be from one of your continuous-attack combinations discussed earlier, from the elbow to an ax hand strike to the side of the neck, which would take you into a side clinch and allow you to continue with a knee strike to the groin. Once inside, you have a variety of options for your counterattack. The key is to use that natural flinch response to get inside, putting you in a position from which you can end the situation quickly with basic strikes.

Spike Elbow

This is a great tool to use if someone throws any kind of angular attack or simply attempts to encroach on your space. All you are going to do from here is step in with a falling drop-step action and spike him in the chest area with the point of your elbow. This is the same action you use for the flinch response, in that you drop your head while still keeping your aggressor in view, and your hands come up to protect your face and neck. The spike elbow arm is brought up high into centerline, and your opposite hand is open and in front of your face for protection. From here, as your opponent is speared in the chest, he will likely be knocked back in pain and have the wind knocked right out of him. But if for some reason he is still on his feet, the follow-up potential is massive. You can clinch to his elbows or go straight into a chin jab or knee strike.

Method of Practice

To practice this drill, have your partner hold a padded shield flat against his chest and simply fall forward into the pad, impacting with the point of your elbow and your body weight behind it. From here the progression is to have your partner close on you with increasing force and power. You will realize that the bigger the guy is and the harder he comes at you, the more your elbow will hurt him as it impacts his center of body mass. The progression continues to a point where you have an armored assailant wearing full body amor, head gear, and 16-ounce boxing gloves close on you as he attempts to knock you out with a big haymaker of a shot that you must negotiate by stepping in with your spike elbow and relevant follow-ups. Take the progression through all stages, from compliancy to an all-out attack with compliancy removed, really pressure-test this superb hard skill. If we must react defensively because we have been caught slightly off guard, then the best course of action is to be defensively offensive and the spike elbows offers just what we need for that purpose.

Practice on a heavy shield with a partner, as well as against a padded assailant presenting you with a forward attack.

Drop slightly as you cover your head and move inside to jam the attack.

Continue instantly with a clinching elbow strike into the face following up as needed.

FENDING A MULTIPLE-PUNCH ATTACK

Fend Drill

Simon Squires, a fellow CQB instructor and friend, developed this method. Form the fend by holding both of your elbows almost as if in the old-style boxing armadillo guard, except your left arm is in the same position as for the spearing elbow. Use your left hand to hold the back of your head stable in order to limit the brain shaking effect of getting hit, while the right arm is held across the front of the face and is anchored onto your left arm by pressing firmly against the same with the back of your right hand. As the subject throws punches, you strive to destroy his fists with your pointed elbows as you dive through his space and guard and Thai-clinch onto his neck.

Whether we are fending multiple punches from a skilled boxer or a windmilling Neanderthal, the response is the same. Cover your head with your hands and arms, presenting your opponent with only the points of your elbows to hit. Drive forward to close him down as soon as the assault starts, get inside to clinch the neck, and finish with multiple knees to the groin and thighs. Follow up as appropriate.

Protect your head with your arms and offer your attacker only the points of your elbows as targets.

Follow up by driving into your opponent's neck.

The action of striking the point of the elbows with the closed fists is employed as limb destruction, a principle that comes from the Filipino martial arts. This is an incidental action and certainly not its primary function, but it is useful to make the skill "offensively defensive"!

Once inside the arc of the weapon, you are in an ideal position to immediately follow up with your counter-response. At UC, we call this principle "Cover, Crash, and Counter!"

COMMON GRABS AND HOLDS

This segment deals with any kind of frontal grabbing attack, one- or two-handed, where the subject has grabbed either your throat or parts of your clothing. In most cases, your response will be the same to either method of grab. That is to say that you will trap and seize one of your assailant's hands in order to prevent him from getting away from you as you simultaneously counterattack with one or more basic strikes. The thing to bear in mind in all cases is that the grab to your person will precede some kind of strike from your opponent.

With a single-handed grab, the most likely attack is a punch, whereas the two-handed grab usually precedes a headbutt. Therefore, your counterattack must be both aggressive and instantaneous. In cases when the grab is aimed directly at the throat, your response will be the same except that you will drop your chin and shrug your shoulders to prevent the choke having the desired effect. Time is of the essence here, so your response must be immediate and aggressive.

One additional point to bear in mind regarding one- and two-handed clothing grabs is that, once you are grabbed, the subject will not offer you a nice straight arm with his thumb facing upward and stand there while you apply a nice intricate wrist or elbow lock like you see practiced in martial arts dojos the world over as martialists practice with nice, compliant partners. Instead, the subject will grab with one or both hands and attempt to yoke you violently upward before he adds a pummeling strike. There won't be any time to wrestle the limb into position for that nice-locking technique.

Remember, we're talking gross motor action here, so just trap a hand and go to ballistic striking, using your nearest weapon to the nearest available target, and end it quickly. The difference lies in compliancy—in real life, you won't have any. What you will have is a determined, resistant opponent who offers no help to you. In the dojo, with a compliant opponent, all the nice intricate techniques will work; take compliancy away, and most won't work.

The solution is to keep it simple, train a minimal number of functional reactions, and pressure-test what you have in simulation training to develop the confidence to apply it during an adrenal-induced state.

Frontal Grab—One or Both Hands

Here we see a single lapel grab with a rear-handed punching threat to follow and a double grab, which usually precedes a headbutt. Always bear in mind that most subjects will grab and yoke you inward and follow immediately by an attack. Your response, therefore, must be immediate.

In one movement, trap the subject's holding hand to your body as you flank him slightly. Then move away from his attacking side while you simultaneously fire into his face with a clawed palm strike or throw a chin jab straight under the chin and continue the attack into the eyes. From here, continue by grasping his side for one or more rapid-fire knee strikes to his groin.

The sequence ends by you slamming the subject into the wall if further follow-up is needed.

Rear Choke/Strangle

This is the classic ambush attack common to a mugging scenario and can also precede sexual attacks on women. Whatever the circumstances, if you have been caught from behind in a rear forearm choke, you must have had a low level of awareness and will now have to make the best of a bad situation.

Getting caught in a rear forearm choke could mean that your level of awareness was too low for the circumstances. It also means that you are now in a less-than-ideal position.

Your first objective is to create enough space between the choking limb and your own throat. This is done by dropping your chin and shrugging up your shoulders as you hook one hand over the radial edge of the choking arm and pull it down to reduce pressure on your airway.

Simply move your hips to one side and attack the groin repeatedly with slaps or hammerfist strikes. This will create the opportunity to turn into a side neck clinch and finish with any combination of headbutts, knees, and elbows as a follow-up.

Finish by snatching the subject to the ground as quickly as possible!

NOTE: If you are caught in a rear choke or any kind of hold from the rear, strive to drop your chin and pull on the holding arm straight away. From here if you can bite the holding limb, do so and follow up with a shot to the groin; then turn and clinch to finish with knees and elbows. If, however, you are pulled straight back and off your feet or onto your heels as the hold is applied, then forward inertia will *not* be possible. Your only option is to push into the ground with your feet, driving back in the direction your attacker is pulling. Your objective is to smash him into a wall or onto the ground with you landing heavily on top of him. Now smash the back of your head into his face and attack the groin repeatedly. Your goal is to get to your feet ASAP.

Side Headlock

If you are caught in a side headlock, your response must be immediate, as the subject's transition to punching you repeatedly in the face or taking you to the ground will be rapid. Go straight for the groin by firing in rapid slaps. Follow this with a grabbing, ripping, and crushing motion if his clothing is loose enough to grab; most times it won't be. This is where an awesome development of hand strength and grip will pay great dividends. As you do so, keep your other hand busy by reaching up and over his head until your index and middle fingers find their position under the subject's nose or philtrum.

Once there, yank his head back in one viciously explosive movement. This will break his balance and structure, as well as expose his throat for a strike or trachea type grab that will put an end to the situation quickly.

Alternatively, rapidly repeated chin jabs have also proved effective!

To sum up this chapter on situational defense, remember that how you train is how you will fight, so work a few basic responses and pressure-test them. Again, many methods of reality-based self-defense will offer a large number of options to such a scenario, but I would suggest that you find one or two that work for you and practice them with a noncompliant partner wearing body armor and add a little role playing to your practice.

Of course, when you practice this kind of drill in a group class or training session, the startle response that would accompany a real ambush attack won't be present. The best that you can do is to have your partner attack at random with a variety of grabs from all angles, including the rear choke, as you stand there with your eyes closed tightly after spinning in a complete circle a few times to increase your disorientation. You are still conscious that something is going to happen, but at the same time there is a slight state of anxiety that will force you to keep all your reactions basic and simple and of limited choice. Remember Hick's law? This is how we train at UC to cultivate spontaneity.

CHAPTER 13 AWARENESS AND OBSERVATION DRILLS

I would like to start this chapter with a recap and a deeper in sight into some of the fundamental principles that make up our game plan. As discussed earlier, the power base for our practiced game plan comes from the development of habitual awareness.

RECAP OF COOPER'S COLOR CODES

In Chapter 4, we learned the importance of Cooper's Color Codes and the OODA loop. Here I want to briefly recap the most important aspect of the codes, that of condition yellow, and also to introduce you to a hotter state of condition yellow called yellow alpha. This is a method of actively scanning for threats and is often used by the urban operative in the field of close protection or law enforcement. Credit for this additional text goes out to my training partner, friend, and fellow CQB instructor John Deacon. In this chapter, I also add condition black, which refers to situation that may make it necessary to use lethal force. But first here's a quote from Jeff Cooper, the man who constructed the color code system:

> "I have devised a simple color code, which is used to enable the student to assume a state of mind appropriate to the various states of readiness he may need. A man cannot live constantly looking down his sights with his finger on the trigger. But you can, with a bit of practice, learn to switch your mind into a more advanced state of readiness, in which certain preset decisions are easier to make."

Condition White (Switched Off)

This is the state in which an individual is oblivious to danger, eyes wide shut, unaware of his surroundings and the body language and actions of those around him. We all need our white time; it's decompression time and should be reserved for those occasions when we are in a safe environment, such as at home, when our doors and windows are locked and we are relatively safe.

Condition Yellow (General Alert)

In this alertness state, you perform an unobtrusive 360-degree scan of your surroundings, during which you see people you don't know before they

see you. This is where you should be whenever you are in unfamiliar territory or you have no control over your surroundings, e.g., you're walking down the street. We should always maintain this state of vigilance when out and about.

Condition Yellow Alpha (Heightened Alert)

This yellow variant, which Dennis Martin created, explains a state of heightened awareness for situations that require more than general alertness. For instance, it is employed when you are on bodyguarding detail and are out with an important client. The difference between the two yellow conditions can be understood by looking at the way a radar works on a battle ship: there is the passive sonar, which does a sweep of the surrounding area to observe anything in the region, and active sonar, which rotates at a higher speed and alerts the operator of anything that should not be there. In other words, during yellow alpha, you are actively scanning your surroundings.

Condition Orange (Specific Alert)

This is the condition that sends your mind into the "guard" state. You see something that attracts your attention and immediately begin to assess and question whether this is a threat.

Condition Red

Fight time! Your assessments are over, and *you* are acting preemptively. You don't let the threat bring the attack to you and put you on the defensive—*you* take the action to him. Be aggressive and don't stop until he is no longer ambulatory.

Condition Black

This condition, added by firearms instructor Massad Ayoob, represents the direst of circumstances: "lethal assault in progress." Any incidents involving a firearm, an edged or impact weapon, or attacks that employ strangulation or other potentially lethal measures fall into this category.

This information may seem like a lot and depending on your perception of self-protection you might even be thinking, "What has this got to do with someone attacking me?" While I can sympathize with you, I must say that if you can't see that someone presents a threat (in other words, you are in condition white), then you will not be able to do anything to prevent it. Our primary option is and always will be avoidance, and as you may have discovered from the physical training we cover in our programs, violence is raw and brutal and therefore should be avoided wherever possible.

THE Xs AND Os GAME

Another useful method of testing our mental preparedness is by playing a game known as "Xs and Os." Jeff Cooper also developed this exercise as a useful tool for testing your awareness in the street. In his book *Principles of Personal Defense*, Cooper described Xs and Os as follows:

> "Make it a game. Keep a chart. Every time anyone is able to approach you from behind without your knowledge, mark down an X. Every time you see anyone you know before he sees you, mark down an O. Keep the Os in front of the Xs. A month with no Xs establishes the formation of correct habits."

A modern variant of this exercise is by simply touching the # and * keys on your cell phone to catalog the same results.

PROFILE RECOGNITION

For this drill, you are simply going to take awareness out into the field. Wherever you are, out and about on your daily routine, you are going to actively scan for a specific distinguishing feature on the individuals you see in your daily environment. For example, with discretion you might actively count how many men you can spot with any kind of facial hair, or you might notice as many people as you can wearing a red top. These are merely examples; the idea is to get you looking around and taking mental notes on what is going on around you.

Another factor that goes hand in hand with awareness is preparedness, and again I am using some excellent input from John Deacon. As far as preparedness goes, we needn't delve quite so deeply into the subject, although I will share some thoughts and allow you an insight into the proper way to view this essential survival skill. Prepared-

ness can also be termed *willingness* in the sense that you are committed to a specific course of action—i.e., you are prepared or willing to inflict damage on another human being in order to protect yourself and those you love.

"Being willing means to fight until the fight is over or there is nothing left to fight about."
—Ed Lovette and Dave Spaulding, *Defensive Living*

I believe this quote sums up the extent to which we must go to achieve a basic form of security in this area, and is a fair and accurate description of what preparedness/willingness entails. Listed below are some recommendations from Dr. Alexis Artwohl, which can be found in her book *Deadly Force Encounters* (coauthored with Loren Christensen).

- Stay up-to-date on tactics and techniques.
- Develop confidence backed by real skill. Know that your techniques will work.
- Practice mental imagery at least once a week.
- Learn what the physiological responses are to the flight-or-fight response and understand what will happen.
- Understand and accept that you may have to use deadly force.
- Strive to improve your observation and assessment skills.
- Trust your instincts.
- Develop a powerful will to survive.
- Maintain a high level of physical fitness.
- Stay mentally positive.

Understanding Aggressive Body Language

Verbal Cues

- Offensive and insulting language
- Loud screaming and shouting (threats)
- Disjointed and unintelligible speech (abnormal stuttering)
- Rapid speech (high-pitched voice)
- Single-syllable answers to questions (such as, yeah, so, and)

Physical Cues

- Red face from blood surge
- Increased breathing
- Vein protruding from face/neck
- Clenched fists (extreme body tension), hunching of shoulders, and other similar symptoms
- Wide-eyed stare
- Finger pointing (prodding)
- Hand concealment (shift of body)
- Chest puffed out
- Hands/arms splayed
- Neck/head pecking
- Finger beckoning

Here is a physical example of aggressive body language showing arm splaying, classic neck pecking (like a cockerel), and an aggressive facial expression. Remember, the aggressor will probably only display one or two of these cues, which ones will depend on him. But any of these is a clear indication of aggression and will signal that a physical attack is imminent. Therefore, an awareness of aggressive body language is essential.

ADRENAL STRESS CONDITIONING DRILLS

"How you train is how you will fight."
—Maurice "Mo" Teague

"The bigger the fear, the greater the courage."
—Unknown

Aggression Therapy Training

This drill originally came from Geoff Thompson. Basically it has a threefold function: (1) it allows the recipient to experience naked aggression and the familiarity of aggressive body language and dialogue, (2) it will allow you to practice using the fence so that you can learn how to control the

spatial relationship between you and a potential aggressor, and (3) it will help desensitize you to the effects of naked aggression. The thing to understand is that when you are faced with aggression, regardless of whether it is the real thing or simulated in a classroom, your body will react in the same way each time—that is, it will sense danger and secrete adrenaline into the system.

The aggression therapy drill requires two or three participants: one person will be the recipient whose job it is to protect his own personal space with the fence while projecting a calm and controlled demeanor, while the other one or two persons will play the role of aggressor and will shout and swear at the recipient in a threatening manner and display aggressive body language, such as splaying the arms, puffing up the chest, neck pecking, and basically offering a display of extremely aggressive behavior.

This experience will enable you to familiarize yourself with these feelings and gain some degree of control over them. This is a very important factor when learning to protect yourself in a live confrontation. Any potentially violent situation will induce fear and an adrenaline dump (see Chapter 5, "Understanding Fear and the Survival Stress Response"), and the obvious fact is that if you can't control yourself on the inside in such an encounter, then how can you expect to control the person you're facing? You may have 20 years of martial arts training behind you, but if you have never experienced real, ugly, naked aggression with the pending threat of some serious "in your face" violence up close and personal, then there is a good chance that the adrenal dump will be so severe that you will simply freeze up into a state of hypervigilance, leaving you completely unable to access your skills.

Aggression-induced training will help you to avoid this. This drill is simply a learning exercise, so there is no physical striking at this stage. There will be the occasional shove and the slapping aside of hands as you fence off your aggressor, but that's about it. A point to remember is, as discussed earlier, whenever you find yourself having to keep someone at bay with the fence, you must never allow him to touch you in any way more than twice without taking preemptive action. As you will recall, the final precursor to violence is the closure of distance. To do that, the aggressor will need to move forward and will therefore touch the lead hand of your fence, or he may try to slap your hands away as he attempts to close the gap. Both of these actions count as the individual touching the fence; therefore, this is when you need to take physical action. In this drill, however, your training partner—or partners if you are facing two aggressors—will touch your fence frequently when he moves forward and slaps your hands away as you work to control him with the fence. The obvious reason is that this is a just a drill for practice.

Practice using the fence to control the subject and try to project a calm and confident demeanor. It is important to remember to talk with the hands and to shift body position so that it is difficult for an aggressor to set up his attack. The problem with photos of the fence is that they make it look static; just bear in mind that this is not the ideal. As you move around, use this as an opportunity to actively scan your environment ever so discreetly while keeping an eye on your objective. Work up to practicing with two training partners for an increase in intensity.

MILLING

The next adrenal stress-producing drill comes from my good friend and fellow self-protection instructor Alan Charlton. A variation of the army's initiation test called "milling," this drill basically involves two individuals, wearing 16-ounce boxing gloves and a gum shield, standing toe to toe and punching each other all out for a short duration. Alan's variation maintains the tradition of gloves and gum shield but places both individuals on their knees in front of each other in punching range. The kneeling position is for two reasons: to limit the amount of punching power that both students can deliver and to prevent both from getting away from each other. The result is a good pressure test for both.

The risk of getting knocked out is slight, but it certainly exists, especially if you are paired with someone who can really bang. The drill is performed in groups of three combatants, with two facing each other on their knees as the third gives the signal for the bout to begin and counts out loud for a duration of between 10 to 20 seconds. When this time is up, the person who counted will change places with one of the combatants for another bout. The rotation will continue until all three students have had two bouts each.

This drill can also be performed using slaps. Making yourself perform drills like this from time to time will add an element of pressure to your training program. The pressure lies in the anticipation before the drill begins and in the teeth-gritting intensity required to get you through it, especially when you are paired with someone who has the ability to really pressure you. After a few bouts of this you can get a kind of high that will leave you with a healthy respect for each other and can be a real confidence builder.

SIMULATION AND SCENARIO TRAINING

Until quite recently, the majority of simulation and scenario training programs were designed for military and law enforcement use-of-force instructors, who were trying to improve impact weapon and empty-hands skills. This kind of training provides a number of ways to implement padded simulation armor training into a defensive tactics program. Courses of this kind have recently become available to the civilian martial arts market, and a lot of self-protection instructors are implementing elements of this training into their own curriculum with a good degree of success.

Any simulation or scenario training has three requirements to make it functional: that it be safe, dynamic, and realistic. The four components that make this possible are the instructor, the format, the equipment, and the supervision. The instructor is responsible for putting together the simulation or scenario. Having combatants wear body armor ensures the first factor, safety. And if the equipment enables them to practice their techniques in a dynamic and realistic manner, the other two factors are also met. Of course, this will depend on the type of equipment you have available. There are specific fully padded suits on the market, such as the Redman and the FIST training suits. This specialized equipment is what the military and law enforcement groups tend to use, and it is also commercially available.

This equipment will permit the trainee to use near- to full-contact blows to his training partner's body, but as with nearly all the protective equipment available on the market, it will allow only a limited amount of impact force directly to the head. This is due to the brain-shaking effect that direct impact to the head will cause. At present, no manufacturer has found a way around this problem, although Peyton Quinn's excellent adrenal stress training facility in the United States has come the closest with its "Bullet Man" suit.

The Bullet Man suit is basically a hugely

An instructor outfitted in a FIST training suit.

Examples of the Redman training suit being used for scenario training.

Here is an example of the Bullet Man suit and the kind of aggressive role-playing suit used by the "woofer," played by UK FAST Defense instructor Chris Walker.

padded American football helmet with a reinforced shoulder structure that fuses the whole thing together to limit the brain-shaking effect. The suit also has an extremely well padded groin piece, which allows you to strike full force without damage to the recipient.

FAST DEFENSE SCENARIO TRAINING

I highly recommend this kind of training as a cross-training supplement for all schools involved in self-protection and even the martial arts in general, traditional or otherwise.

At the very least, you will need a full-face head guard or, better still, a full-face hockey helmet and a decent quality groin guard with some additional padding added to it along with a gum shield and some fingerless sparring gloves. Body armor and shin protection are optional though not essential.

The next thing to consider is your environment; any sharp-edged areas or corners should be removed or covered with padding. Matted floors and walls are desirable if you do this kind of training on a regular basis—the key point here is limiting injury. The final safety consideration is to establish who is fit to play. First make sure that participants understand that this type of training will induce varying degrees of adrenal stress (resulting in an increased heart rate), depending on the intensity of events. Also stress that, regardless of the safety measures implemented, there is always a possibility of someone sustaining a knockout or injury. There has to be, or else where is the pressure?

The next responsibility of the coordinator is establishing the format or theme of the simulation/scenario. It is important to understand that the difference between simulations and scenarios is that any simulation is a pre-decided drill known to both the fully armored assailant and the trainee. Realism is added by using role-playing and a fair degree of physical impact during the contact drills. In a scenario, although planned to follow a certain theme, you are pretty much left to your own devices regarding how you deal with the action once it starts.

Here you have to look for the beauty within the scruffiness, as Geoff Thompson would say. Learning to apply your craft within this pressure realm is the key to making it work for real. That's why it's nice when you drop the padded assailant with clinical shots and also when you see someone making his art work and applying it with aggression and forward pressure, what I would call "making it combative."

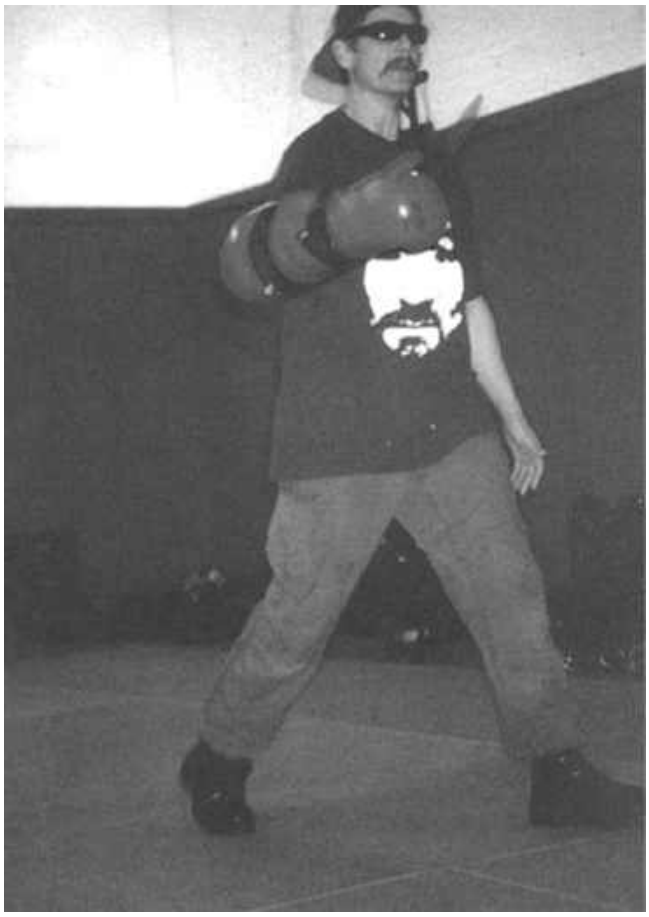
Right: These photos were taken during scenario practice. As you can see, scrappy is how it looks because that's how it is. But within that scrappiness, there is the beauty of functionality.

ADRENAL STRESS GAME

Originally designed by Bill Kipp of FAST Defense and Peyton Quinn of Rocky Mountain Combat Applications Training (RMCAT) Adrenal Stress Conditioning in Colorado, this drill induces adrenal stress and forces you to overcome the dreaded freeze response, which is common during a violent and aggressive situation. Here are the rules for this drill: you are limited to the use of a padded baton or a plastic baseball bat, and when the opportunity to strike presents itself, you put in three good shots to the padded arm of your crazed knife-wielding assailant. Then a whistle will blow, and the simulation is over. Your objective is to simply reach the other end of the room, which represents safety.

Your assailant has a different idea: his objective is to act in an unpredictable crazy-man style—dressed in street clothes, with maybe a baseball cap and shades to add to the effect. He will most likely approach with some kind of deceptive dialogue—for example, asking for any spare change. His knife-concealing arm will be held behind his back. The lunatic role-playing of your would-be assailant should be convincing, as he shouts expletives at you in a salivating frenzy guaranteed to elicit the adrenal response in anyone. Your role is to maintain a good degree of control by giving clear verbal commands: "Stay where you are!" or "Show me your hands now!" You need to make sure that you maintain distance and good positioning throughout this verbal interview. At some point, he will draw his knife (a wooden training knife) and attempt to rapidly close the distance as he frantically slashes and stabs at you. In an ideal world, your response would be to instantly attack with your three well-aimed baton strikes to his newly presented weapon arm.

Then the whistle will blow, and the simulation ends. The sole purpose of this drill is to re-create the effects of the adrenal stress. The fact that this is just a drill in a safe training environment makes no difference to the adrenaline effects that you *will* feel during the simulation. When faced with what the brain perceives as naked aggression and danger, whether it is real or just simulated role-playing, your brain will shift into the mid-brain survival state and start dumping adrenaline into the system to help you out of the danger you're facing. This is



the fight-or-flight response. In spite of the fact that both players in this simulation have a pre-decided role to play, it still remains an effective adrenal conditioning experience. Dry mouth, tunnel vision, and auditory exclusion are just some of the effects you will experience during the ordeal.

By doing this kind of training, you are desensi-

tizing yourself to the effects of adrenal stress while overcoming the dreaded freeze response by taking positive physical action. It is important to remember that this is an instructional drill designed to make you more efficient in the heat of combat. Therefore, any mistakes you make can be pinpointed and rectified on your next go. Unlike a real situation where second chances are rare, here you can drill it until you get it right. This exercise and others like it will help you develop confidence under pressure.

The following is an example of a dynamic scenario. Any scenario requires role players. In this case, there are six. Two armored instructors play aggressors having a violent confrontation on the dance floor of a busy venue. A trainee takes the part of a doorman, who has been called to the scene where the two are having the altercation. Another person, playing a member of the public, has seen you approach and runs up to you exclaiming, "Excuse me, mate, there's two blokes over there having a right ol' set-to. You'd better get there quick!" The two additional participants are the evaluator—who will take stock of how you deal with the situation, looking at your observation skills, your body positioning, verbal dissuasion, and physical response—and the safety officer, who blows the whistle to stop the event. So now you have your format and your players, as well as a basic idea of what you are dealing with. What you don't know is how these two armored aggressors are going to react to your intervention.

In this case, the instructors have been briefed beforehand—unknown to you, they are going to ignore all your attempts to resolve the situation peacefully until you make a mistake in your positioning, at which time they will both turn and attack you from both sides with the aim of closing in and rendering you inactive. Of course, the desired response will be to maintain an ideal position from which you can stay in front of one aggressor and keep the other directly behind him. The instant the closer one makes any attempt to move on you, you take control of him with some kind of functional restraint that will allow you to use him as a shield between you and his mate or, if the situation requires, to take him out with a clinical preemptive strike. From there, you either strike the second aggressor or keep him at bay with verbal commands until the whistle blows, ending the scenario.

This is just one theme example of an adrenal stress scenario. The potential for creating different kinds of simulations and scenarios is limited only by your imagination. The situation could involve weapons, multiple assailants, a mugging, or anything else in a huge variety of mock environments. I have used everything from a nightclub environment to train doormen to a car to train a taxi driver. All in all, this method of modern combatives training is a definite step in the right direction for anyone wishing to test his skills under pressure in a safe training environment.

The majority of today's martial artists are missing that essential adrenal stress-inducing element in their training. Of course, whenever you add pressure testing of any kind to your curriculum, the adrenal stress will be present. Just ask any of Geoff Thompson's students about their now-legendary animal days, and they will tell you the same thing. I find this same pressure most Sunday mornings when I get up early to go to my local amateur boxing club for a tough workout, followed by a few rounds of hard sparring with some of the best carded fighters in the club.

Simulation and scenario training with quality body armor and supervision will reduce the chances of injury and make the whole event a lot safer, thus making it a good training method for everyone. Hard sparring and animal day–type drills with no more than a pair of bag gloves and a gum shield are the best method for pressure-testing that I have ever tried, short of a live situation, but not everyone is prepared to try it, for good reason, and I respect that. Scenario training can provide the stimulus for desensitization to adrenal stress through realistic training. So long as it places you in that mid-brain survival state and allows you to drill a positive physical response to such stimuli, then you will be training effectively. I highly recommend this kind of training to anyone involved in combatives, martial arts and the security industry. I use this method and elements of it to teach all my students with positive results. I also have access to a night club environment complete with dance floor and bar areas, toilets, and fire escapes that we use during the day and mid-week nights, specifically for scenario training with a few of my students who are also doormen. This gives us the opportunity to recreate scenarios from past situations and look at our best options.

COM-FIT COMBATIVE FITNESS

The strength and conditioning drills used at UC come from a variety of influences. The main element we are looking to improve is all-out anaerobic adenosine triphosphate (ATP) output. ATP transfer of energy is as close to the activity of combatives or a real fight as you can get. Compared to any other component of fitness, the maximum intensity of five to ten seconds of anaerobic work is the mirror image of your combative skills being applied against a resisting subject. The thing to remember here is "how you train is how you will fight." Add to this the adrenaline and the chemical cocktail that will accompany you during a "live" situation and you will find that half of your energy will be chewed up before it even gets physical.

ATP is the energy source that will fuel this anaerobic output. This is your body's first source of energy and will only last a matter of seconds. Once this is depleted, your ability to deliver hard and fast strikes will be severely impaired. This is why you must train to preemptively put down your opponent in the first five seconds of the altercation. To duplicate this ATP depletion, you must experience it in training.

The name for this task-related fitness training—along with strength-oriented training that focuses on first building functional connective tissue capable of immediate recruitment and explosive output—is com-fit. The concept of extending ATP output involves using a striking hard skill on an appropriate impact target preceded by an exercise designed to pre-fatigue the trainee. The exercise should be chosen to place loading on the striking limb—for example, push-ups—prior to striking with the hands; another loading option is to perform high step-ups followed by continuous knee strikes on the Thai pads.

You could place a number of pad men in a line, each holding pads/shields for specific strikes and have your trainees run from one station to the next in circuit fashion, working the specific exercise and then striking the targets. The pad men shout out feedback and verbal encouragement as the drill becomes harder and harder. This type of training will make you want to give up, but by telling yourself to go harder and faster you will develop the mental toughness that is so essential in a violent confrontation. As you start to adapt to the intensity of these CQB circuits, you can add to their difficulty by including obstacles to jump over or crawl under, or by using wrist and ankle weights to increase the workload. With a little imagination, you will be able to come up with lots of ways of keeping your circuits varied and interesting.

These circuits are the core of the conditioning phase within the UC curriculum. In addition, I recommend that you look at other fitness aspects to supplement your training program, such as weight/strength training, hill sprints, skipping, and cardio work. The most important parts of the body relating to combative strength are the neck, midsection, and grip.

A strong, thickset neck serves several functions. First, if you ever catch a solid punch on the jaw, a strong neck acts as a shock absorber to reduce the chances of your getting knocked unconscious. Second, a strong neck is a definite asset in a grappling situation, which is why all wrestlers train their necks hard. Finally, a well-developed neck visually connotes power, which certainly can't hurt.

A strong midsection is what's known as your seat of power. The body mechanics of power striking and punching all come from a combination of hip power and their supporting muscle structures, while dropping your body weight behind your shot. Second, a good strong mid-section will withstand the impact of a decent body shot should you ever get caught with such a blow. I am talking about a complete development of strength throughout the entire mid-section area, including abdominal muscles, the intercostals and oblique muscles of the sides and the muscles of the lumber spine. We are not interested in building a tiny wasp waist with an elegant six-pack.

What we want is a combat functional column of power. Finally we need to look at hand and grip strength. Here we are interested in developing awesome power and strength in the fingers and thumbs for grabbing, ripping and tearing along with strong wrists and forearms for solid power punching and striking.

Com-Fit Circuits

The following are examples of CQB circuits. These kinds of drills can be performed in small groups of about five people in a class environment.

Four people will stand side by side in a line and serve as pad holders. The fifth person will perform the circuit until he gets to the end and then join the line as a pad holder, at which point one of the pad holders performs the circuit. Continue like this until the whole group has been through, which completes the circuit. Repeat the circuit two or three times. You can also work this circuit in pairs, with one partner holding a pair of focus pads in a variety of ways and the other one striking the pads. You can also work solo on a heavy bag or training dummy.

You can work for repetitions in one of two ways. The first is to perform 10–15 repetitions (reps) of the exercise designed to pre-fatigue the muscle group you are working. Immediately perform 10–15 reps of the strike, move on to the next exercise, and so on until you reach the end of the circuit. The second method is called the 1–5 system. For example, using the push-up for your exercise and the palm strike for your strike, you drop down and do one push-up and then get up quickly and hit the pads with two fast palm strikes (left and right palm strikes count as 1 repetition), drop and do two push-ups, get up and hit the pads for two counts (that's two rapid strikes followed by another two rapid strikes) and so on for three, four, and five counts. With both methods you are expending a massive amount of anaerobic energy, which is why we limit the exercises to no more than four or five for each circuit. You can also incorporate short, fast wind sprints into the circuit to increase the intensity.

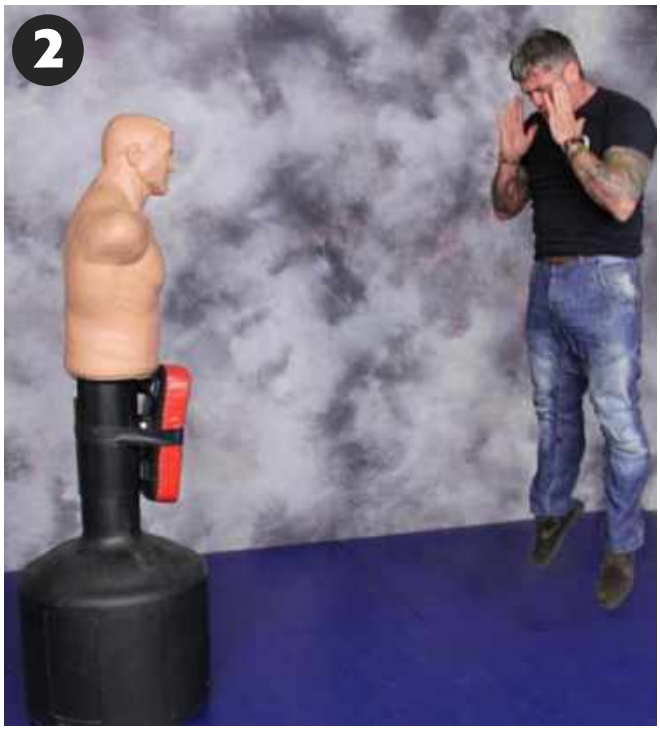
Com-Fit Circuit Drill: Push-Ups to Palm Strikes; Vertical Jumps to Clinch Knees; Back Dips to Elbows; Squat Jumps to Spike Kicks

1. Push-ups to palm strikes: To increase your energy output in a short period, perform all your strikes in twos—for example, left and right (L/R) palm strikes. Each L/R is counted as one repetition. Stick with the principle of tiring the muscle group that's involved in the technique you use before striking the pads. Also alternate between the upper and lower body and use a variety of equipment.

2. Vertical jumps to clinch knees: Perform high vertical jumps followed by L/R clinch knees to a partner's focus pads or a heavy bag, or if training solo, a mannequin or Body Opponent Bag (BOB).

3. Back dips to elbows: Perform back dips and follow with left and right elbow strikes.

4. Squat jumps to spike kicks: The sequence is concluded with jump squats followed by L/R spike kicks.

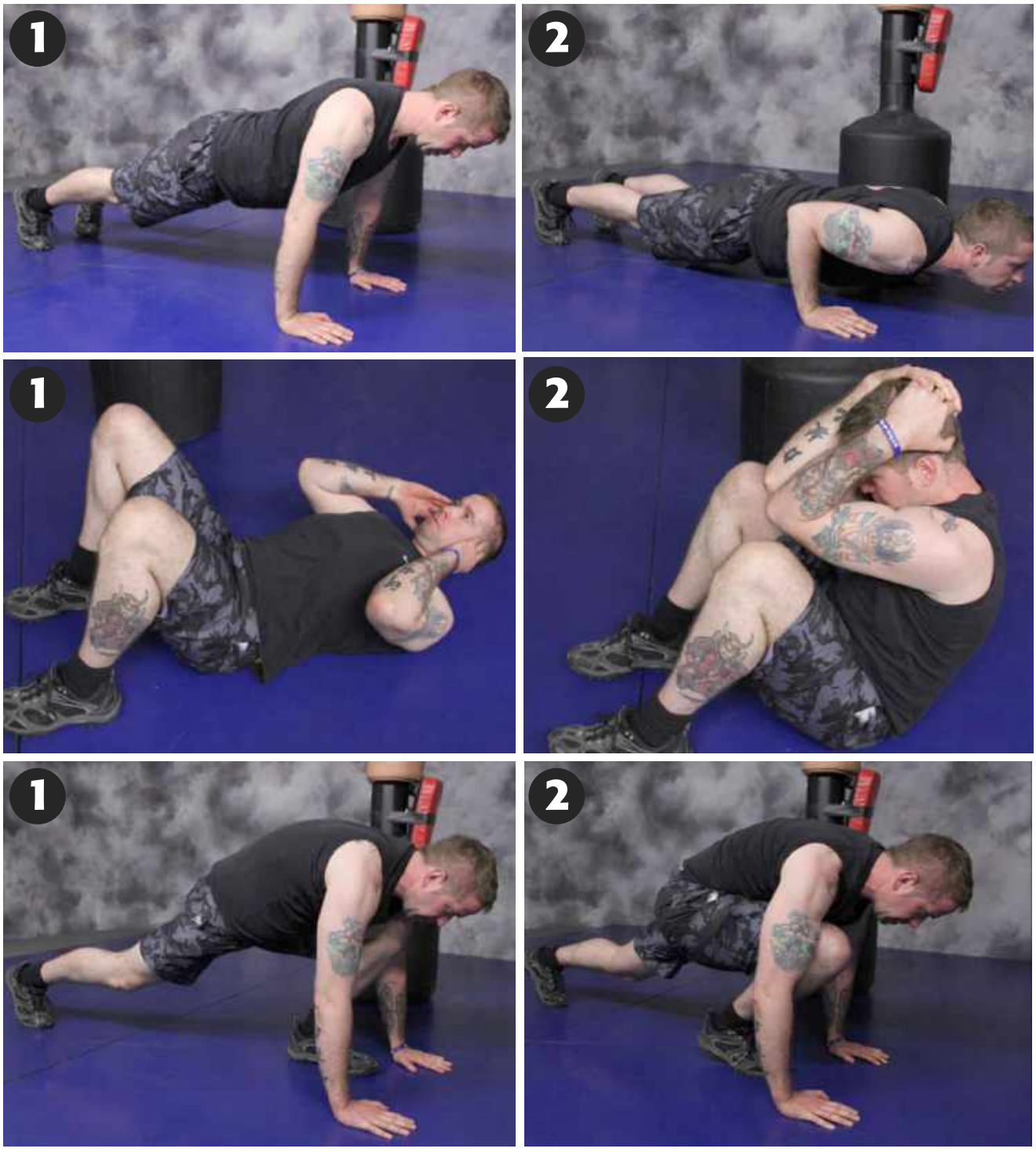


Com-Fit Circuit: 3, 2, 1 ATP Drill

In this ATP sequence you simply strike with three palm strikes, then two elbows, and one knee strike. This is performed as hard and fast as possible, with each six strike combinations counting as one rep. Do a total of 10 reps. To make this drill even more taxing, you can pre-fatigue the body first with wind sprints and floorwork, such as burpees or burpee jumps, before going straight into the 3, 2, 1 strike sequence.

Com-Fit Circuit: ATP Floorwork Drill

Start the circuit with 10 reps of three floor exercises performed back to back as fast as possible. The first exercise is push-ups, quickly transitioning into flinch cover sit-ups, and rapidly moving into a set of left and right hill climbers (each L/R motion of the legs counts as one repetition). From here, get to your feet as fast as possible and perform any combination of an all-out striking sequence on impact equipment for 10 reps.



Com-Fit Circuit: 1 to 10 Drill

Execute a single combative strike (in this case, the knee) and, instead of working for power, aim for speed and endurance. Have a partner hold a shield against his thigh and count out loud from one to ten. You respond by kneeing the shield with the same number as your partner counts out—for example, when he shouts one, you do one knee; when he shouts two, you do two knees; and so on up to ten. Work as fast as you can and have your partner shout out encouragement as you start to tire. You can alternate knees for the count or work one side at a time.

Com-Fit Circuit: Isometric Wall Squat Drill

Take a squat position against a wall and hold it isometrically for 30–90 seconds, followed by 30 seconds of all-out L/R clinch knees on a training dummy. The wall squat is a good exercise to introduce yourself to your inner opponent. As soon as your legs start to burn, your mind will quickly start to put forward reasons why you should quit. This is your inner opponent; use this exercise as a means to take him on in a mental battle. No matter how much you feel like stopping, just disassociate yourself from the pain and carry on until you can't physically hold the position any longer. Make a note of how long you last and try to beat it next time. This is a great way to build mental toughness. You can also make it harder by performing 10 jump-squats after the wall exercise and combine 10 L/R spike kicks with 10 L/R knees.

CHAPTER 14 COUNTERWEAPONS TRAINING

Counterweapons training is a major topic in self-protection and deserving of a book of its own if you want to do justice to the subject. With that said, I will attempt to give the reader an insight into some of the drills that we practice at UC to help prepare our students for such a scenario. Please bear in mind that no one system of martial arts or combatives will ever hold all the answers regarding empty hands against weapons, particularly concerning a knife. What I teach is based on the best methods I have come across during my years of training. My influences here come from an array of methods and experienced people: Filipino kali and Western combatives as well as from the experience that I have gained from the three live knife situations that I have been involved in so far.

In this chapter, I will cover both edged weapons and blunt weapons and sharp slashing. The first thing I teach my students regarding weapons after the points about awareness, avoidance, and escape have been made (always the best options) is how a weapon might be used in such attacks against them. Of course, to do this it is necessary to teach the individual how to use the weapon so that he can gain an understanding of just how the weapon might be used in a real attack. Regardless of whether you are up against an edged weapon (e.g., a Stanley knife, stiletto blade, or a broken glass or beer bottle) or an impact weapon (e.g., a lead pipe, a hammer, a crowbar, or piece of 2 x 2), the fact remains that any of the above tools can only be used against you in a swing/slashing motion or in a stabbing motion by either jabbing or poking any number of targets on your body.

EDGED WEAPONS

Before starting on edged weapons, I need to discuss certain aspects relating to the knife issue as it stands currently in the UK. Although we are not generally thought of as a knife-carrying culture, as compared, to say, the Philippines, Indonesia, or certain states in America, statistics show that the majority of street crime that takes place in the UK will usually involve some kind of edged weapon. Let us begin by looking at the latest statistics involving knife and edged weapon incidents in Britain today; this source of information will include input from people who have been previously involved in violence relating to knives, including input from convicted criminals, gang members, and young offenders as well as victims of knife attacks.

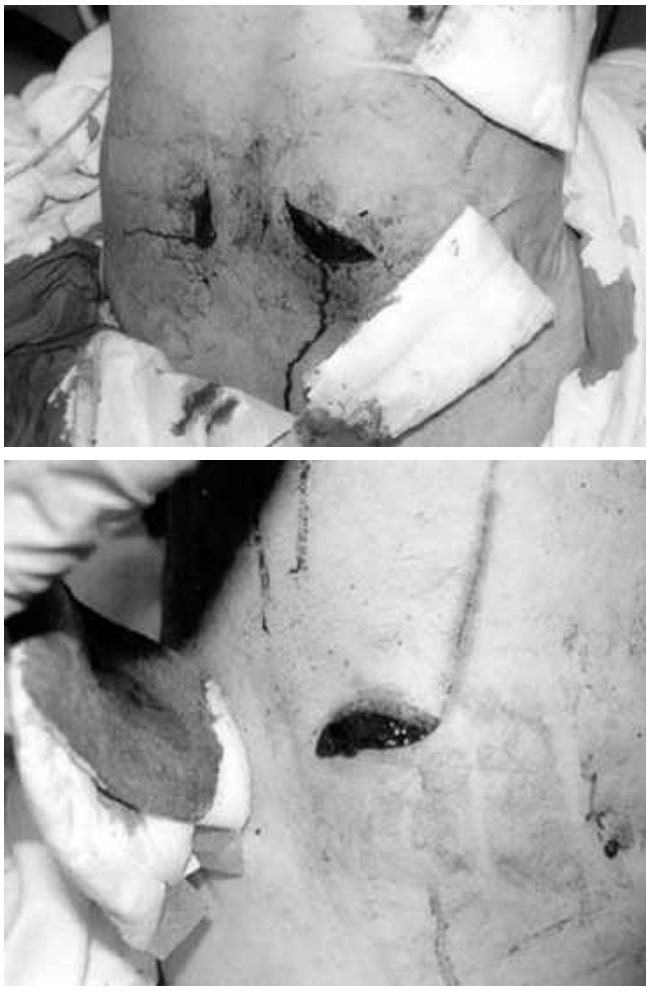
I will then discuss some of the consequences of knife-related incidents, for example, serious injuries and death. I will begin by giving the student an indication of the current laws in the UK regarding the carrying of edged weapons. From here, I will continue by showing some medical pictures depicting some of the horrific injuries that have been inflicted on victims of knife attacks, including victims of slash, puncture, and defensive wounds.

I apologize for the graphic content of this material, but I feel that such a depiction is necessary to illustrate the kind of damage that can be inflicted by such edged weapons in the hands of one with the intention to harm. The photographs show victims who actually survived their attacks (most came within a fraction of meeting with their death) and the one person (with the defensive wounds to his hands) who was not so lucky, as the huge number of slash and puncture injuries resulted in his demise.

Edged-Weapon Awareness

I will begin by looking at the essential elements of awareness that may allow us to avoid trouble in the first place. Then I will discuss various purpose-designed edged weapons and those that can be adapted for use as such. I will then demonstrate various methods of weapon concealment, body lan-

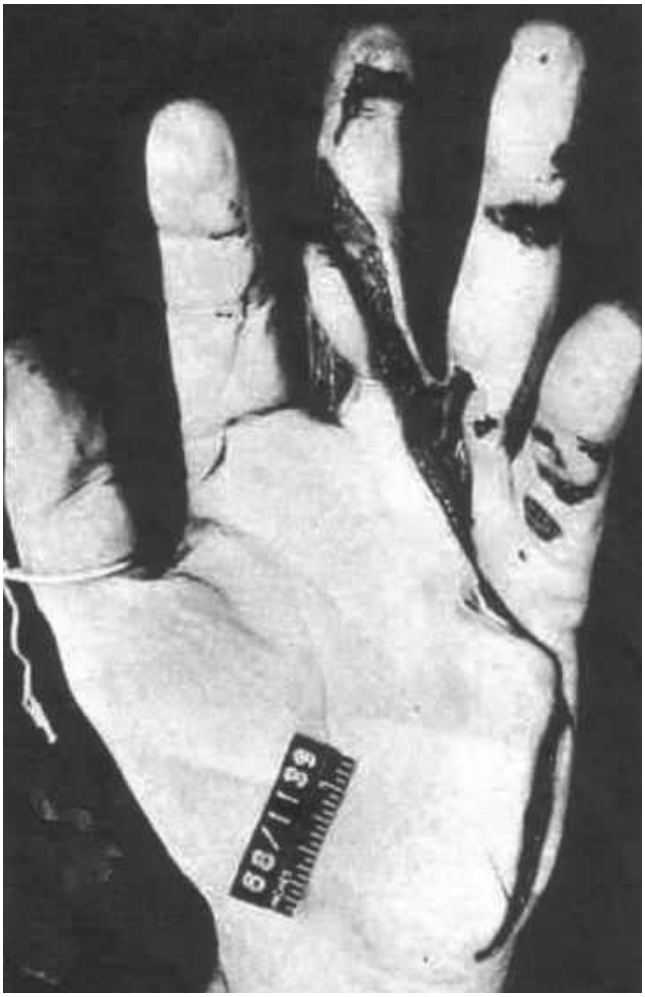
This photo shows us the kind of puncture wounds inflicted by a large knife, probably a carving knife, to the lower back area.



Top and bottom pictures depict puncture wounds to the back and to the left side of the rib cage.

Above: Here is the result of a slashing attack, the kind sustained from a Stanley knife. The first wound was to the neck and the second to the shoulder.

guage, intention, and options if you find yourself in a possible altercation where a weapon may be involved. There are literally a huge number of commercially available edged weapons on the market today, not to mention tools that might be used as weapons and makeshift objects with a point or an edge that may be used as an improvised weapon.



Right: Defensive wounds sustained in an attempt to grab the knife, which resulted in the severing of tendons and major blood vessels.

Body Language Cues

To read body language cues, we are going to rely on our awareness, our instincts, and our understanding of body language. We have already discussed certain elements of this earlier; for example, understanding the verbal and physical cues of aggressive body language and also understanding the modus operandi of a potential aggressor's attack ritual and dialogue. Here we are going to need to become more specific in terms of picking up on any inclination that our potential assailant is indeed carrying a weapon.

It may well be that spotting a clue before the weapon is bought into play is the only thing that will give you a chance to take the necessary action to get the jump on the situation. If your aggressor already has the weapon at hand and the intention to use it, you are most certainly going to have a harder time dealing with the problem than if your instincts told you that he is carrying and to take action as soon as the assailant reaches to put his hand in his coat, thereby shutting down the threat before he gets the knife out. Remember, you should always assume that the aggressor is armed and scan for his hands. Can you see both his hands and all his fingers? Common methods of concealment are discussed in more detail below. In terms of body language clues indicating the concealment of a knife, if you can't see your assailant's hands, ask yourself why they are hidden.

Remember also that you could be approached with some kind of distracting dialogue to divert your attention before the aggressor draws the weapon. Look out for erratic eye movement, a pale face, wide-open eyes, or a trembling hand. These are all indicators of an adrenal reaction that will, of course, be present if he intends to stab/slash you. Such tells might be the only things that separate you from being blindsided and meeting your maker.

Here are several examples of body language cues that could indicate a concealed weapon: the aggressor moves one hand behind him out of your

sight; he conceals his hands with clothing; one hand reaches into the front of his waistband, which is hidden by his shirt or jacket; if the knife is already at hand, it will often be palmed or thumbed in such a way that it remains obscured from view; and the nonweapon hand will often display some kind of deceptive body language to misdirect your attention.

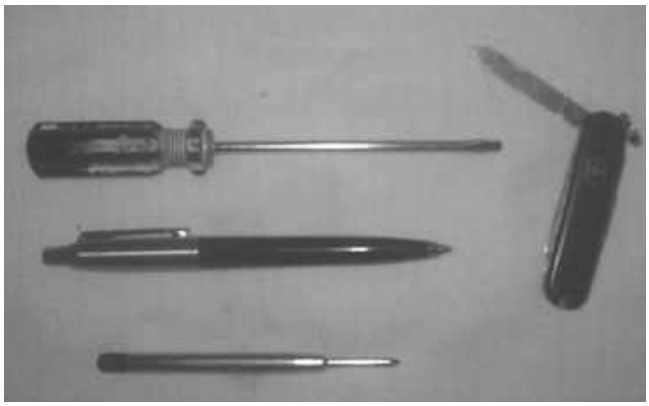
At the end of this chapter, we will look at a couple of drills that will allow you to practice spotting these language cues and shutting the subject down quickly and clinically.

Examples of Edged Weapons

Ever so often in the UK (and other nations as well), government agencies will offer an amnesty on all edged weapons. Citizens are encouraged to take any edged weapons to the nearest police station and turn them in with no questions asked in a bid to get such weapons off the street (much like the firearms amnesty programs offered in many American cities). I think that this is a good idea and that such a practice should continue in the future. However, amnesty will never stop such weapons from being used in violent attacks as long as the individual has the intention to commit crimes. The thing to understand is that any knife, whether by design or improvised, is merely a tool. Even the most dangerous edged weapon is still only a tool—stick it in a drawer for a hundred years and it won't hurt anyone. The essential ingredient that turns a tool into a weapon is the intention to use it as such. With such intention, a pencil can become a deadly weapon.

Basically any object with a point or a sharp edge can be used as a slashing/stabbing tool; coupled with ill intention, you now have a dangerous weapon. The following list includes items that can be used to cut or stab; some of them were designed for combat; some for utility; and others are simple, everyday items that could be improvised for offensive action with little or no makeshift engineering:

- Screwdriver/chisel
- Broken glass
- Ripped piece of tin
- Ceramics
- Stanley blade
- Pencil/pen/metal pen refill
- Syringe
- Bicycle spoke



As long as an individual has the intention to cut or stab, there will always be an edged weapon available to him. If we look into the history of early edged weapons, we can see how man is a tool-bearing animal and how our first weapon was a simple stone; then man realized through experience that certain shaped stones—e.g., those with sharper edges—could do the job more efficiently. Later, he realized how if he bashed one rock onto another, he could create these sharp edges and points—hence, the birth of the first edged weapon and tool. Then came the age of bronze, followed by that of iron. Then man discovered the ability to melt steel, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Methods of Concealment

An important point to bear in mind relates to the concealment of an edged weapon. If an individual intends to use a knife on someone for whatever reason, I can almost guarantee that the knife will be carried in a concealed manner on his body. During my time working in the field of security and doorwork, I carried out hundreds of

body searches, and I can tell you that there is a wide variety of places where an edged weapon can be carried and concealed. The most obvious place is in a pocket. Others include inside the waistband of a pair of trousers, down a sock or boot, taped or strapped to the front or back of the body or the limbs, and under a hat or headdress. I have even found weapons concealed in a hollow dreadlock of someone's hair! The list is vast, but you get the picture.

Another point to consider is the fact that if someone really wants to stab or slash you with a knife, he will try to reveal his intention until after he has stabbed or cut you. The individual may approach with dialogue as a distraction before drawing his weapon. One method of concealment that is often used right before the employment of the weapon is what's known as palming. This is when the blade is held flat against the thigh and covered by a cupped hand, or the blade is held in the palm of the hand and turned away from the intended victim's view. Needless to say, you must be wary if someone approaches you with a hand behind his back or hidden from view by his clothing, such as a hand in the pocket or inside a jacket or shirt. At this point, you should put up your fence and start creating firm physical and verbal boundaries as you demand that the individual show you his hands; if your instincts dictate, you should take physical action by shutting the person down and immobilizing the obscured limb as you trap and strike to a vital area. As I move on to the practical stuff, I will include drills that will cover this aspect of shutting the assailant down before he has a chance to draw his weapon, as we work off his body language cues.

In most cases, your attacker will strive to use the element of surprise to conceal his intentions from you until it is too late. The saying goes that a stabber won't usually show and a shower won't usually stab. This is by no means written in stone, but it is logical to assume that if someone wants to use a knife on you, then he is unlikely to give up his most strategic tactic—the element of surprise. If someone pulls out a knife on you and actually shows you the weapon, it is usually to obtain something from you or to make you comply with a demand—for example, a mugger pulling a weapon and demanding your wallet. With that said, there will always be cases where the would-be assailant tries to hide his attack, but heightened awareness allows his potential victim to spot the weapon before the attacker has the chance to use it. In this situation, although he has shown his hand, the bad guy still has the intention to use the weapon and may be equally committed to doing so. The flip side could be that the person may have had no real intention to use the weapon but upon its discovery does so out of sheer panic because things aren't going his way.

Remember that knowledge is power, and you need to know and understand as much about this kind of aggressor as possible if you are to have any chance of prevailing in such a situation. This brings us right back to the most important element of our game plan: our *awareness* and all aspects of it, such as awareness of our environment, attack rituals and dialogue that a potential assailant may use, and an awareness of body language. Awareness is particularly important where concealment of weapons is concerned, as this may be the only indication you receive that a weapon is involved. If someone sets your alarm bells ringing by their actions and their body language, then go with your instincts. If your instincts tell you that something is not quite right, you should listen carefully to them and act accordingly. One clear indication that someone is carrying is if he frequently feels over or inside his clothing as if to reassure himself that whatever he is carrying is still there, often done subconsciously without his realizing it. The basic rule to follow is if you can't see all the fingers of both hands of an individual within close proximity to you, then get ready to act.

STAB Principles

The majority of this information came to me by way of one of my instructors who has been a great influence on me over the years, the late Peter Robins. Along with Paul Child, Robins formulated one of the most practical edged weapons course I have ever taken part in, called the Strategic Tactics Against Blades (STAB) course, which was taught as part of the CODA curriculum. Although the teachers of this excellent program made no pretense that it held all the answers, it still remains without doubt among the best available information on the subject.

The 3 Es: Escape, Equalize, Eliminate

When assessing available options, we start with what is known as the 3 Es: escape, equalize, and eliminate. If you find yourself in a situation where an edged weapon could be involved and you have the option to *escape*, then that should be your first choice. If you can't escape, your second option is to *equalize* the threat. This simply means that you should pick up anything close at hand that can be used as a weapon—a stick, a brick, or anything that you can hit or throw at your assailant. This could be anything that acts as a shield or a barrier between you and his weapon, perhaps a briefcase, a trash can lid, or even a chair. An equalizer is basically anything you can use to even the odds against you slightly.

If you can't escape or equalize the odds, then you have to *eliminate* the threat. This is where you will have to shift into the serious do-or-die mindset in order to take this individual out to the best of your ability. This is where I feel the physical and mental tactics from a program such as the STAB course offer some of the best methods available to do just that. If the situation is really that dire, then I would rather have knowledge of this stuff than anything else to deal with that threat. (The elimination option is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.)

THE 3 Es

ESCAPE

EQUALIZE

ELIMINATE

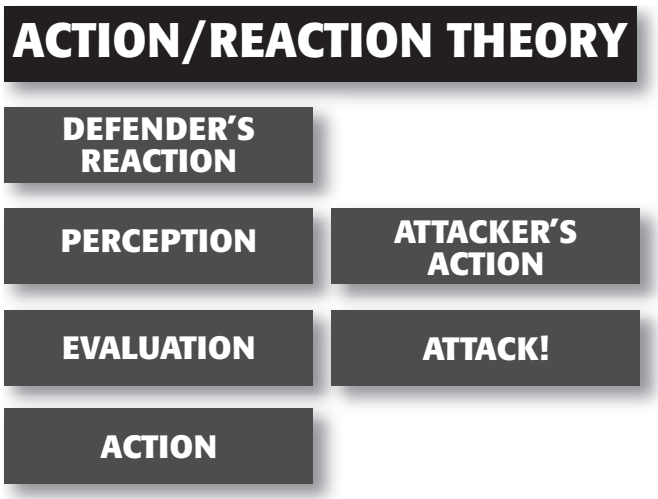
This stool, along with the wielder's willingness to employ it as a weapon if necessary, is being used in an attempt to equalize the threat of an armed attacker.

When equalization fails, you must eliminate the attacker, as is seen here with a hit to the attacker's jaw, until you can escape.

What follows are some strategic tactics taken from CODA's excellent STAB program. These are essential if you are to bring such a situation to a successful conclusion. The first and foremost aspect here in terms of importance is that awareness is in place. If you don't see it coming, there's nothing you can do about it! Assuming that your awareness is in place, we will now look at the following models.

Training Pyramid

The Training Pyramid is made up of three essential principles: awareness, technique, and intention. Of the three, intention is the most important. *Awareness* is essential, and we should all know by now that we must remain switched on wherever we are. *Technique* is also important—after all, if we



are to take successful action, we must be technically proficient. With that said, it is the *intention* to use the technique to the absolute conclusion of the encounter and to win at any cost, regardless of the outcome, that is the most important part of the Action Pyramid, and that all comes down to having a combative mindset, or the *willingness* to do whatever it takes to win the fight.

Action Pyramid

The principles that make up the Action Pyramid—surprise, aggression, and speed—are all

equally important and work together to create a complete role reversal that will take you from potential prey to predator by allowing you to regain the initiative and make your assailant choke up. Basically, here we are using a three-point plan by combining the elements of *surprise* at *speed* with extreme *aggression* into our physical explosive response backed up with the intention to eliminate the threat.

Action/Reaction Time

One final factor to bear in mind is how your thought process affects your reaction time, as compared to that of your attacker. In a knife situation, the potential victim has two distinct disadvantages. The first, and most obvious, one is that your attacker has the weapon. The second is the fact that before you can take any physical action, you have to go through four stages of thinking before deciding on what course of action to take, whereas your assailant has only one decision to make—whether to stick that piece of metal into you any way he can.

Once you have gained an insight into the topics discussed thus far, then and only then can you move on to the physical side of things and the training drills involved. The first thing that we need to look at here is stance, or a position from which the knife can be employed most effectively for combative use.

Before proceeding, you must understand a couple of points. The first is that the purpose of this information is *not* to teach you how to use an edged weapon for the purpose of combat; it is to give you an understanding of how an edged weapon can be employed against you. With that said, the chances of you ever coming up against a trained knife fighter are likely remote. Most individuals who use a knife in the street have no clue how to stand or how to use a knife to its maximum efficiency. They will simply flail the knife in random slashing and stabbing motions, similar to angles of attack that we will cover shortly. Trust me, armed with such a weapon and the intention to use it, they will be more than capable of offering you deadly force. But the best way to become more effective at defending against a knife is to learn how to use a knife offensively. That being the case, it makes sense to make use of the best information available and learn how to use the

knife properly. Therefore, the first thing we will cover here is the most efficient posture to use.

Knife Fighting Stance

The knife can be held in either the forward or rear hand. In the stance depicted, we can see that a shield of bone covers the central line of the body. The crouch position not only makes for a smaller target surface, but it also pulls the lower abdomen in and out of reach of an attacker. The blade is tucked in tight and becomes almost invisible.

Since knowing how to use the knife gives you a deeper understanding of how it may be used against you, you need to learn the angles of attack. The Filipino martial arts use as many as 12 angles to define the lines of offensive attack. As great as these arts are, they do contain a lot of flowing-type drills that incorporate this high number of angles, and such drills take a long time to master. A couple of my friends/training partners, Lee Sinnot and John Deacon, broke these angles down into three lines of attack: the ABC principle. A is any attack along a diagonal line, B is on a horizontal line, and C is a thrusting-type attack. These angles, along with snap cuts and the continuous rotational method of Redondo (which will not be discussed here), are all the offensive movements that you will ever need to know.

I offer this information to give you a basic understanding of how the edged weapon could be used, but your likelihood of encountering a trained knife fighter is rare. Such an encounter would be like sticking your hands into a high-speed propeller. With that said, if you stick a knife in anyone's hand, you have instantly made him dangerous. An edged weapon requires absolutely no skill to use. As my friend Marcus Wynne summed it up: "It's not rocket science—pointy end goes in, straight bit goes across!"

Your attacker won't be thinking about how to use the blade; he will simply stick it in you anyway he can. But we need to start somewhere, and the following will give you an insight into how to use the blade to gain a greater insight into fending against it.

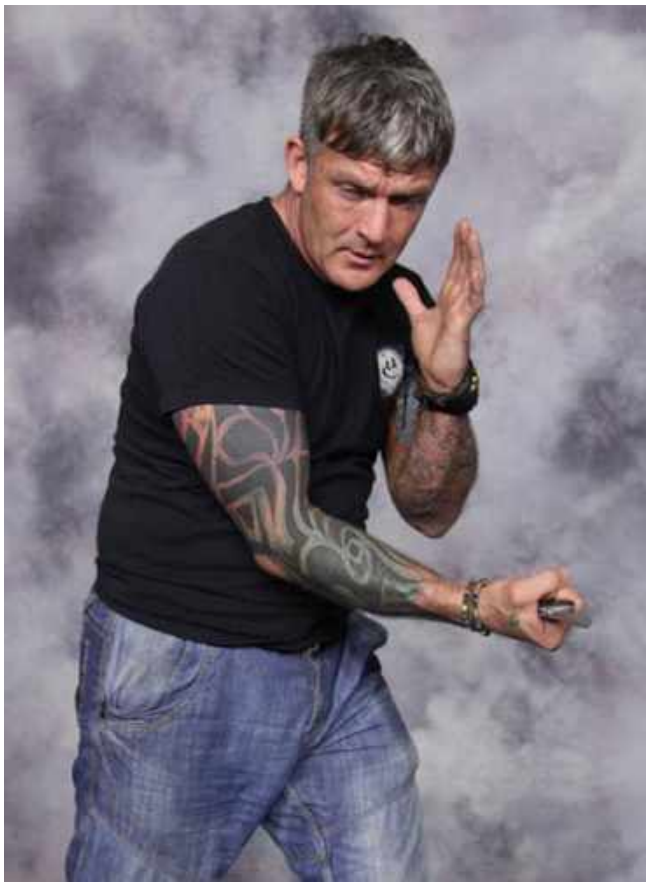
ABC Principle

A = Diagonal

A represents a diagonal cut from any level from high to low, both forehand and backhand. The thing to remember when employing these angles in any maneuver is that they must be accompanied by good body mechanics, allowing your full body weight behind each movement. Also there is no wasted movement—everything is kept tight. This is especially so with the knife, which requires a much smaller action compared to the use of the stick. Work your angles within a shoulder-width box, thereby keeping everything tight.

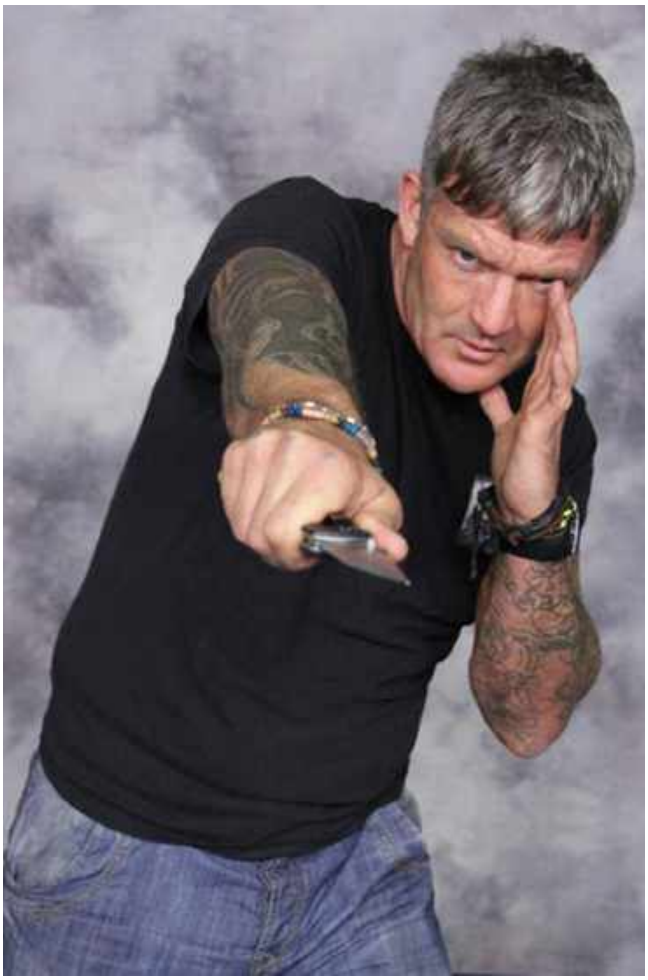
B = Horizontal

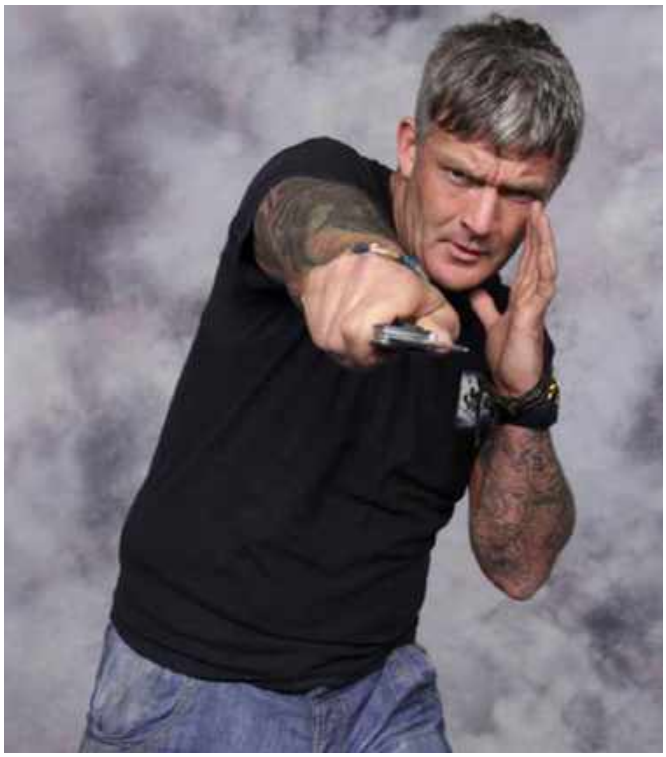
B is any horizontal cut from all levels and returns along the same lines, including forehand and backhand combination.

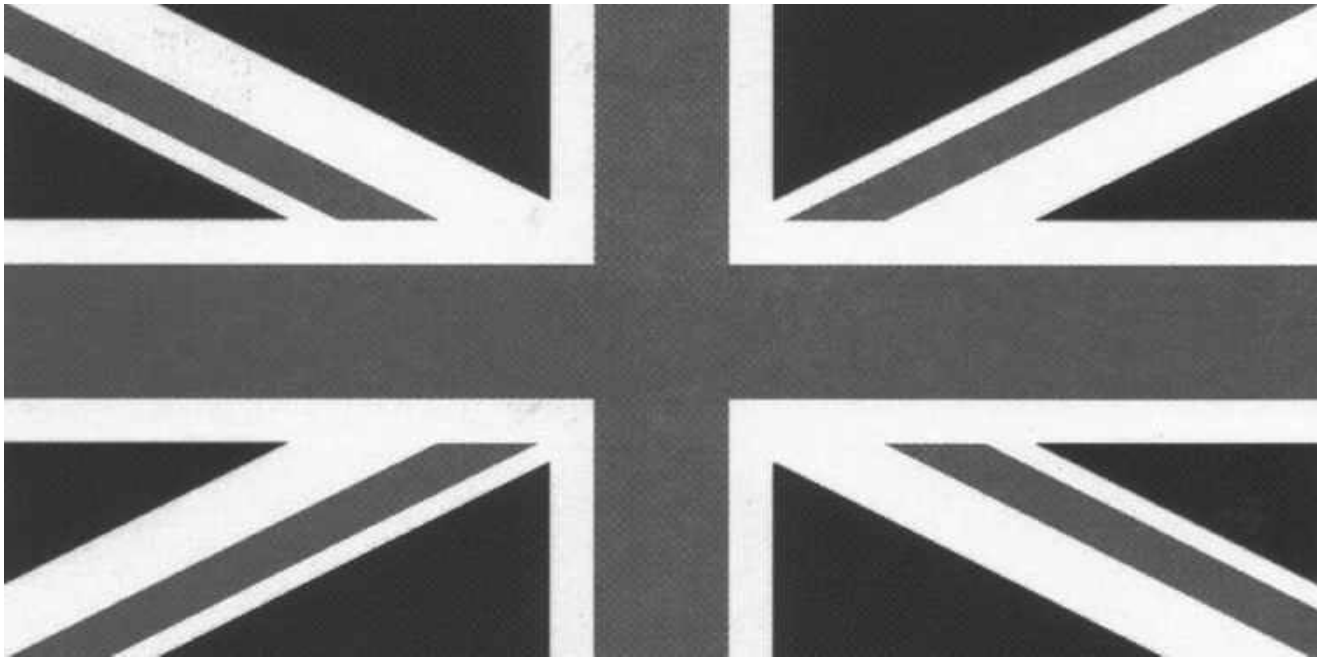


C = Thrust

C is simply any thrust on any level including a hooking motion to the left and right sides of the target. During World War II, British operatives were taught to follow the lines of the Union Jack as offensive angles.







Edged-Weapon Drills

Fouling the Draw, Drill One

In this drill you will be working off the reaction or body language cues given by your partner. Face each other at arm's length, making sure that you remain in a neutral position with good situational control. Your partner will have a training knife tucked into his waistband behind his back. Start at no more than 50 percent speed and have your partner slightly exaggerate his movements so you get an idea of what you are looking for. Basically, if he starts to turn away slightly by moving the weapon-bearing side shoulder, the elbow will pop out. This is your cue to move. If one of his hands starts to move behind his back or slightly out of view, then this is pretty much the last cue you're going to get. You are looking for any sign that will tell you that your partner is reaching for the weapon. Your immediate action should be to move explosively to the outside (flank) of his non-weapon-bearing side (as shown in the pictures) as you grab or index his arm to gain momentary control. From here, strike hard to the high line and continue with forward pressure and continuous strikes to eliminate the threat.

Once flanked, you will get visual confirmation of an attempted weapon access!

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Fouling the Draw, Drill Two

In this scenario, the subject has the knife concealed in the front of his waistband under his T-shirt. As soon as he makes a motion toward the weapon, your first cue will be his attempt to clear the garment and reach for the weapon. From here, drop-step forward and pin both hands in place to his body. Continue this forward motion by driving the top of your head straight into his face and follow up by walking violently through him with repeated knee strikes to the groin.

Once you both have an understanding of the drill, have your partner move at full speed with a committed attempt to draw the training weapon and thrust it toward your body. If he touches you with it, this means you have been stabbed. Once you start to do this, it will make you a little jumpy. This is good; it is what you need to be to bring out the right reaction. Start bringing in some role-playing and have your partner wear body armor so you can put in the strikes with a degree of realism.

Progress to the point where your partner is wearing a heavy jacket so all you know is that he will draw the knife from somewhere. This could be from a pocket, under his shirt, on the front of his waistband, strapped somewhere on his back or even to a limb, or from anywhere else he can think of. All methods of concealment should be used, and all are fair game to try in this drill.

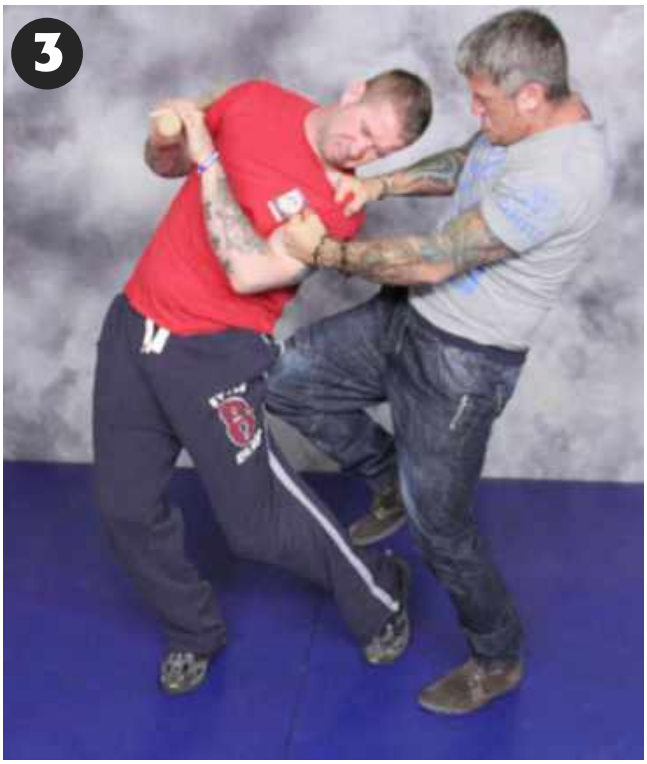
Once you get to this point, you will see just how dangerous the edged weapon threat can be. Stopping the attack at this point is your best chance of dealing with the threat—once the knife is out, it is even harder to deal with such an attack.

IMPACT WEAPONS

An impact weapon, or bludgeon, is among the simplest of weapons. Impact weapons can be purpose-designed (such as a club or bludgeon) or improvised (such as a baseball bat, a stick, an ashtray, or a beer bottle). They can be used in a number of ways to attack. Below I demonstrate overhand, backhand, and two-hand attack sequences.

Overhand Bludgeon Attack

In this situation, you are dealing with an attack from an impact weapon. As with all overhand angular attacks, the response is the same.

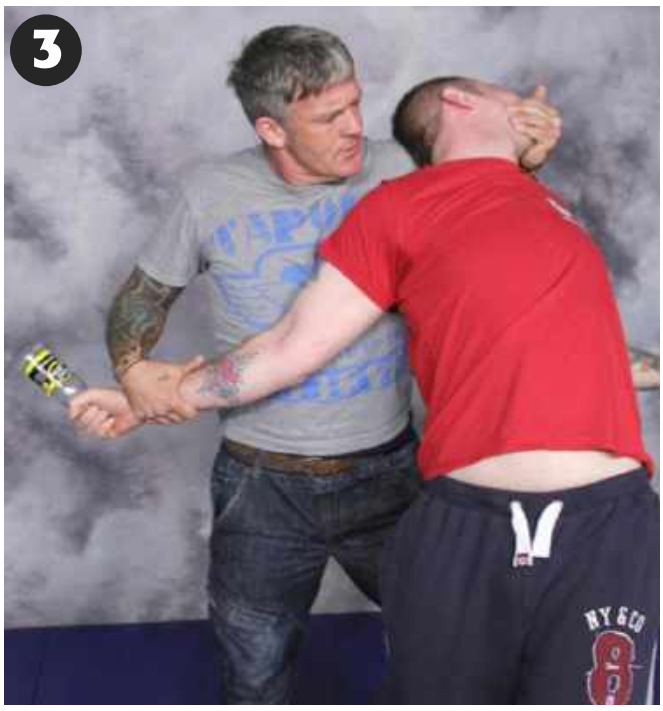


Get inside the arc of the weapon, jamming the attack and positioning yourself in such a way that you can counter immediately with your main striking tools. Here you can jam the attack with your forearms, wrapping the arm as you enter, and follow up instantly with elbow strikes and knees to finish off the attacker.

Backhand Bludgeon Attack

The response for a backhand attack is basically the same as for an overhand attack in that you are going to cover your head and jam the attacker's limb as you move forward. The difference here is that you now move to the outside gate of the weapon-holding arm and jam the attack with the outside of your forearms.

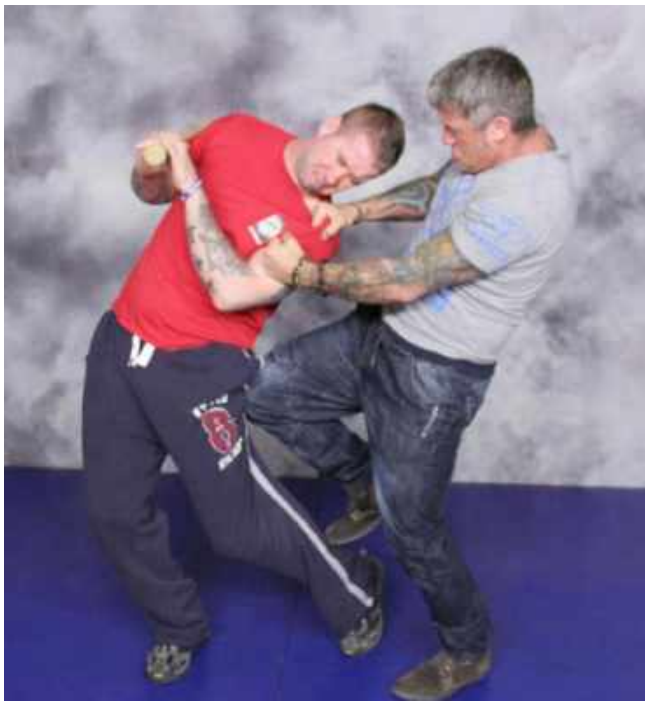
From here, you move behind the subject as you throw an incidental forearm strike to the back of his neck, while maintaining a grip on his weapon-holding wrist. Grabbing his chin, rip his head around as you hold his arm straight against your own chest. From here kick out his leg at the back of the knee, take him down to the ground, finish up with a hard knee drop to the head, and then disengage.



Two-Handed Bludgeon Attack

In this scenario, the threat comes from a two-handed swing from a baseball bat. When compared to attacking with a brick or a bottle, a bat or stick gives the aggressor the additional benefit of range, which means you literally have to vault forward to get inside the arc of the weapon-bearing limb. The key advantage to you is that a swing of the bat usually telegraphs the holder's intent.

Usually the attacker pulls back, as shown, before swinging the weapon into his target area. This gives you an opportunity to vault/crash in and jam the assault before it gains any momentum.



Smash out the subject's base with a low-line strike to his knees to destroy his mobility. Then repeatedly strike his high line with your elbows to take his consciousness.

If your initial reaction to the first swing is to sway back out of trajectory of the bat, then be sure to crash forward and shut the subject down quickly before he recovers for a second swing.

From here it's the same deal: jam him up and take him apart!

CHAPTER 15

UNARMED AGAINST THE BLADE

Please bear in mind that when we talk about defending unarmed against a knife attack, we assume you are doing so out of sheer desperation and because there is no other option. In which case, it is time to employ the third E of the 3-Es discussed in the last chapter: to eliminate the threat by whatever means available. When you look at the technical responses depicted here by photographs, please understand that I am not trying to give you a bunch of "how to" examples that you should follow to the letter to guarantee success.

For me to do so would be irresponsible on my part. Since there is no *guaranteed* option for dealing with a blade, it is with great reluctance that I even approach this delicate issue. With that said, however, if we are interested in living safely in today's society, this issue must be addressed, and we must try to seek the best options available to us. In my opinion, and it is just that, most of what is offered in the martial arts world as workable knife defense is at best extremely dodgy and in some cases simply ludicrous and will get you killed.

I base my opinion not only on my training experience, but also on the research I have undertaken thus far and predominately on my own real experience from three situations involving a knife, all of which I considered to be life threatening and all of which took place before I had gained the knowledge that I offer you here. Obviously I survived all three incidents, but I paid a price to gain the experience.

The first incident resulted in a slash wound to my arm before the threat was dealt with. The second incident came through deception and resulted in my sustaining two puncture wounds, one of which was to my lower abdomen and pierced my bowel, resulting in four days of intensive care and a mess of stitches. The final incident became a standoff because of my grabbing an equalizer and posturing like hell! I offer these examples to show you that I am teaching from experience and not just offering you armchair theory. So instead of step-by-step instruction, it is my hope that you will grasp a few bedrock principles or concepts and apply them to your learning until you are confident. Then, as always, pressure-test them using supervision and safety equipment so that you come up with some workable options. Remember, you need to practice this stuff until it is instinctual.

You have no business trying to disarm someone with an edged weapon unless there is no alternative available. As mentioned earlier, a lot of my

influence here comes from the CODA STAB course. Plus, I highly recommend that you look at the excellent teachings of Kelly McCann and the late Bob Kasper, who was one of the leading authorities on combative knifework and whose instruction is still considered among the best ever offered.

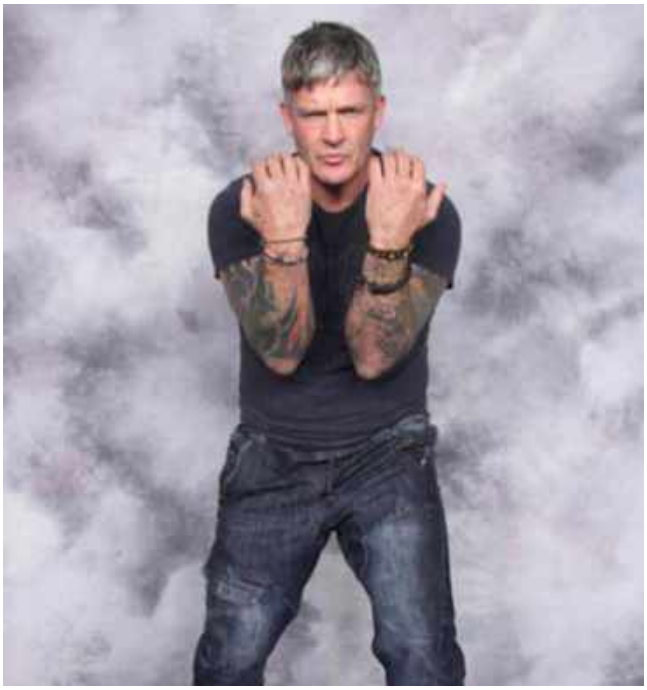
"Although they come from a military background, the most important elements that combatives have to offer civilians are simplistic effectiveness that is easy to learn, easy to execute, and easy to retain."
—Bob Kasper

Without further ado, here are some core concepts to take into consideration before applying them to instructional photographs. Please bear in mind that in any altercation involving an edged weapon, there is a very real risk you will get cut. You never walk into a situation thinking "OK, I'm gonna get cut." That would be negative thinking and, of course, the whole point is that we want to deal with the threat without getting hurt. But we accept that if it happens, we will deal with it and keep on fighting until we win.

BLADE FEND POSITION

If the subject has the weapon drawn and is ready to attack, the situation is pretty dire. If escape is not an option and there is no equalizer available, then you will have to do whatever it takes to eliminate the threat. With this in mind, the first thing you need to do if the attack is not immediate—which would require you simply to react from wherever your hands might be—is to assume a posture that will allow you maximum offensive and defensive capability. The key here is damage limitation. The ideal posture to assume if you have time to adopt it is what I call the knife fence. This is assumed by applying the following steps:

- Angle your torso (internal organs) approximately 45 degrees to your assailant.
- Slightly hunch your shoulders forward and let your stomach sink in.
- Keep your head and face back and away from random stabs and slashes.
- Keep your hands, forearms, and elbows close to your body to diminish target opportunities for your assailant.
- Cup your hands with your palms facing you, as this will turn all soft-tissue targets in the arms—such as veins, tendons, and arteries—away from the blade. If you do get cut, the backs of the forearms are the safest place. Remember, damage limitation is a priority.



- Keep your knees slightly bent and flexible, your feet shoulder-width apart, and your body weight equally distributed on both legs.
- Stay loose, relaxed, and as alert as possible.

Counterknife drills

NOTE: All the following drills start with the defender's back to the wall so that the only way for him to move is forward. Also be sure to use training weapons and eye protection for safety.

Blade Fending the Angles: Drill 1

Here you practice the necessary body mechanics that will allow you to fend against an edged weapon. In all cases, strive to use the backs of your forearms to do so, while attempting to jam the weapon-bearing limb, getting inside the same, and finishing with ballistic striking. The first part of these drills focuses on fending the ABC angles in order of sequence, using understanding and compliancy. There is no counterattacking at this point.

Fending an overhand slash line by getting inside the weapon-bearing limb.

Fending a backhand line of attack by getting to the outside of the weapon-bearing limb.

Fending a thrusting line of attack.

Blade Fending the Angles: Drill 2

Here we progress to fending angles at random using exactly the same lines of attack but at a fast, random, and unpredictable pace.

Blade Fending the Angles: Drill 3

Now we practice counterattacking after each of the angles is thrown; for example in reality you would never stand there fending the blade without taking the offensive at the earliest opportunity. The two preceding drills are only used to get you familiar with the lines of attack and body language cues displayed by the attacker and also for teaching you to get inside the weapon-bearing arm.

Your immediate response to any attack with an edged weapon is to eliminate the threat straight away, so now we put in multiple ballistic strikes as soon as the opportunity presents itself. Take the progression to the point that you are using aggressive role-playing, body armor, and complete noncompliancy. The following sequences are offered merely as examples to demonstrate one way of applying the principles we've just talked about—e.g., fend with the backs of the arms, get inside the weapon bearing limb, seizing it where possible, and finishing the opponent with ballistic strikes.

When you start to work at fending the angles at random, you may well find that alternatives will arise. Just stick to the principles discussed; nothing's set in stone, and there are no guarantees against the knife. Maintain your intention and will to win and you've got a chance.

Overhand Slashing Attack

This is more common to the Stanley knife but is also possible with any bladed weapon with a cutting edged. Understand that this kind of attack will not take on any kind of uniform pattern; it may come straight down on a vertical, diagonal, or horizontal plane or somewhere within all three, but the basic direction will be from outside to inside. The main principle to grasp here is to get inside the weapon. You want to use that jumpy kind of flinch-response action that is used when dealing with an angular attack. Get inside and jam the limb before it gains maximum velocity and wrap the arm to immobilize the weapon-bearing limb and keep hold of it until the threat is eliminated.

From here, keep on striking with knees and elbows until the subject drops in front of you. Then finish with your feet.

Jam the weapon-bearing limb before it gains momentum and then get inside the weapon. From here, wrap the arm and keep striking with the knees until the fight is over.

Backhand Slashing Attack

A backhand slashing attack could come from a position in which the subject had his hand on the blade, concealed in the inside pocket of a jacket or coat (which is why you must have an understanding of concealment and be suspicious if you can't see one or both hands of a potential assailant). Or the subject's initial starting attack could have come from an overhand slash, to which you reacted with instinctively by swaying back out of range to avoid the slash. It is a natural reaction even for a completely untrained individual to return the slash back along a similar arc in order to continue his attack.

Remember, even if your assailant has no idea about how to use a knife in a scientific sense, his only objective is to cut you any way he can. Therefore, his first attack will precede a continuous assault of slashing and stabbing motions. It is also likely that any overhand slash will be followed with a similar backhanded movement and vice versa. Even if he simply slashes violently with the blade, he knows that anything that meets the path of the blade will be cut. It takes absolutely no skill to produce this result.

Here your objective is the same as before: get close to him so that the weapon is behind you. The key here will be to close him down by getting in to the outside of his knife-bearing arm using the same kind of flinch response as before. As Kelly McCann would say, "get some meat up" to protect your head and neck by throwing up both arms. Remember that his instant reaction will be to retract his arm in order to continue his attack. That's why you must seize the limb, preferably at the wrist; stay behind the weapon; and go straight to ballistic striking with continuous attacks until the threat subsides.

Smash him with palm strikes, hammer fists, and elbows to the back of his neck and skull. Also, if you can, you should throw a forearm smash into the back of his neck to ring his bell before grabbing his chin and ripping his head around in the opposite direction to his knife arm and then stamp the back of his knee out and drop him to the floor; finish with stomps and kicks or knee drops onto the head.

Thrusting Attacks

The straight thrust is probably the most difficult with which to deal. If you look at this kind of attack and the defenses against it as they are depicted in films or even in mainstream martial arts, what you will find are unrealistic methods of dealing with what will be shown as a compliant attack, where the subject will thrust when you are ready and leave his weapon-bearing hand out so that you can grab it and apply a nice wrist lock for a takedown, followed by a disarm and fancy finish. Bollocks!

In reality, if the attacker wants to stab you, chances are he will use deception and distraction to get close enough or wait for an opportunity to ambush you, in which case the first you will know about it is after it has already happened. Hence the term: *a stabber won't usually show*. Even if you see the thrust coming, the attack will be fast and retracting and then repeated in a multiple-stab fashion to a variety of targets, which is very difficult to deal with safely. In some prisons across America, the inmates have their own system for using a shank (an improvised knife) that employs a variety of deceptive ploys, including concealment and distraction, to get close enough to attack.

One example is to use one hand to cover the victim's face or actually throw an eye jab first to create pain, at which point the attacker will close the gap and pump the thrust rapidly and repeatedly into the victim's stomach and groin. Another favorite is to tackle the victim's leg as if going for a single-leg takedown and then thrust repeatedly into the victim's femoral artery—ugly stuff.

If you are to realistically defend against a thrusting attack, then you must train to deal with the retraction of the thrust and the sudden frenzied action that accompanies it. As always, your partner will cooperate initially and then work up to a realistic level where he starts to act unpredictably and attacks with a variety of unrehearsed slashes and thrusts with the intention of meeting his mark. The priority in defending against the thrust is to avoid the path of the blade. The first action that you need to practice is unweighting your feet and throwing your hips back, thereby removing your trunk from the path of the blade.

Remember that after the thrust, your assailant will retract the blade for further stabs, and if he knows what he is doing, he will be using his other hand to manipulate you into a favorable position for his continuing thrusts. Therefore, your trained response needs to be immediate. As the subject attempts to stab the midsection of the body, jam his arm (referred to in UC as "fending"), halting his line of assault as shown here. From there immediately wrap the arm to seize the weapon-bearing limb as you blast in with knee strikes to his groin. Keep smashing into him with further strikes until you can use his forward momentum to slam him into the ground, ending the potential assault. Let the pain from your continuous ballistic striking be your knife disarm. As Kelly McCann says, "Disarm by inflicting pain and taking away his intention to use the weapon."

At a bare minimum, strive to get the hips back and jam the arm; from here, wrap it and drive forward with the knees. Drill this over and over as one simultaneous action on your partner. Work compliantly until you are confident enough to fight all out. Add body armor, role-playing, and unpredictable attacks as your partner attempts to stick you with the training knife any way he can while you stick to the principles drilled: get inside the weapon, maintain your hold, and keep striking until the fight is over.

Knife Holdups

The thing to bear in mind here is that if you maintain a state of condition yellow awareness of your environment and everyone and everything in it, then the chances of finding yourself in a knife holdup before putting your game plan into action are remote. For this exercise, we will therefore assume that you have been caught unaware (not ideal) and will now have to make the best of an undesirable situation. Bear in mind that your body's natural initial reaction to this kind of threat, especially if caught by surprise, will be an adrenal dump.

If you are to react with anything significant enough to regain the initiative, you will have to get over that. Your only hope here is that if your attacker wanted to cut you, he would almost certainly have taken advantage of the element of surprise and cut you right away. The fact that he has instead threatened you with the knife indicates he wants something from you—your wallet, your watch, even your car keys. It is not for me to tell you whether you should give up your valuables in the hope he will let you go or take him out of the game right there and then.

That is your personal decision. With that said, we should all agree that no possession is worth our life. But you can't be certain that after getting your wallet your attacker won't still cut you. Statistics indicate that he might. Remember that the saying "the shower rarely stabs" is not set in stone. He may attack out of panic or malice. You never can tell.

If the attacker wants to take you somewhere else or tries to force you into a vehicle, then you only have one option. Never go to a secondary location with an attacker. It is almost certain they he will carry out his intentions if you do so. My advice would be to finish it right there and then with everything you've got. It's time for you to eliminate the threat. Follow these principles as you do that.

- Clear the weapon from its line of attack; in this case, it is held against your throat.
- Seize the knife-bearing arm and maintain grip until the encounter is over.
- Create pain quickly through any means possible and keep attacking until there's no more threat.

As I said before, there may be many variables involved in a confrontation, and Murphy's Law will dictate that things won't always go to plan. It may be that as you try to clear the weapon hand, you can't pull the subject's arm any farther forward than a couple of inches, in which case you will use the only weapon available to you: your teeth. If you bite off one of his fingers, there is a good chance that he will drop the knife. At the very least, you will create an opportunity to follow up.

If the subject is side on to you and there is an opportunity to smash his face and head repeatedly off the dashboard, then do it. The point is you must strive to be ready to adapt as the situation rapidly changes. Keep with the principle of clearing the weapon from your person, maintaining hold, and striking continuously until the threat is over and you should be able to make the best of a bad situation. There are no guarantees, but with committed intention to eliminate the threat, backed up with the combative mindset that you will win at all costs, then you've got a fighting chance.

The following scenarios offer examples of these principles in practice. There is no rigidity to the strikes—you use just hit hard and stick to the principles. I am not going to cover an infinite number of ways that the knife could be held against your person, as the purpose here is not to accumulate techniques. It is about using what tools you've got and being flexible enough to adapt to the circumstances.

First we will look at the holdup threat from the front, which may or may not be up against a wall.

Knife Holdup Threat from the Front

From this kind of frontal threat the first thing to do is get your hands up level with the weapon bearing hand. Keep your palms facing out indicating your compliancy to him. Use submissive facial expression along with artifice and deception ask him a brain-engaging question, such as "What do you want?" Use this as an action trigger to attack. Sticking with the principles, start by clearing the knife a couple of inches from your throat by snatching down on his blade hand; just latch onto the radial part of his wrist and pull suddenly while seizing and pinning his hand to your own chest to immobilize the weapon hand. As you do so, fire your opposite hand strike straight into his face.

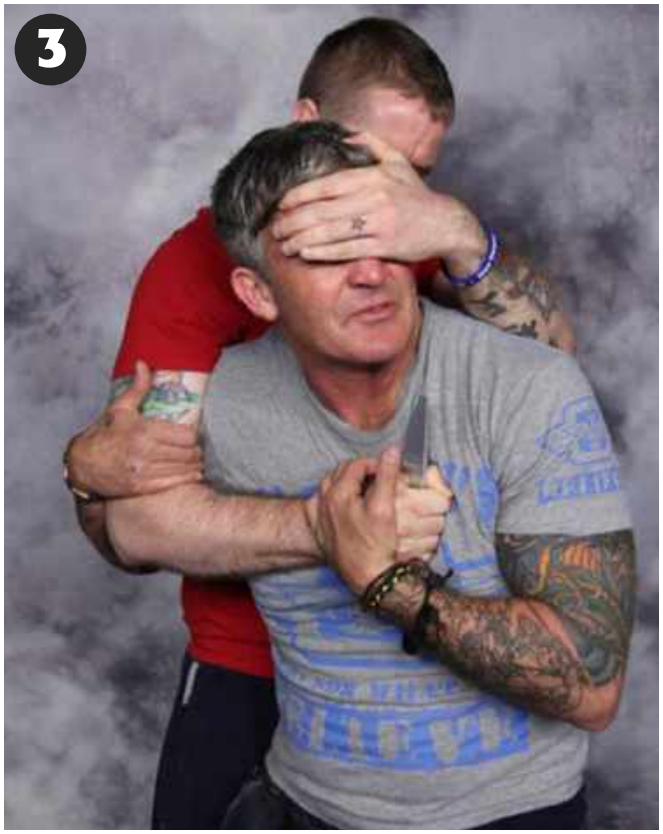
A solid palm strike under the jaw is a good starter; follow up with rapid knee strikes to the groin if he's still on his feet. What you will find with the palm strike is that, as soon as the head is forced back by the power and upward force of the strike, backed up with intention to take his head off, he will go straight down. Follow up with the knees regardless, targeting either his face or groin. Basically, take whatever targets he gives you. Don't release his blade arm and keep striking until the threat is gone.

Knife Holdup Threat from Behind

In this scenario, the subject has approached you from behind. He is holding the knife against your throat while using his other hand to control your head and cover your eyes. Of course, the fact that you have been caught like this indicates a low level of awareness on your part. The first thing you are likely to experience is a massive adrenal response, coupled with a mild to severe state of hypervigilance. The hope here is that you have trained in a manner that will narrow the gap between reality and training. You must practice this stuff on a regular basis, put it under pressure through scenario training, and strive to create an adrenal response and all that goes with it so that if you get attacked in real life you are familiar with how your body will react.

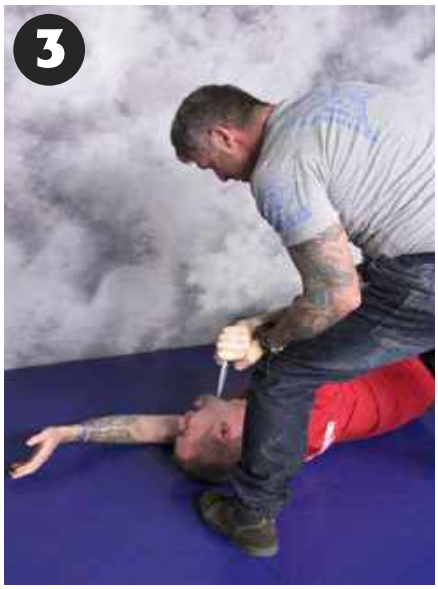
Of course, no amount of role-playing, body armor, and scene setting will accurately duplicate how you would feel if the situation is real and life threatening, but this training will help you build the motor memory for an aggressive response. The focus in all your training should be on your game plan: remain aware to avoid and escape or, if given no choice, to hit first and then escape. But the what-if factor needs to be addressed. Anything practiced that is not geared for preemption is considered part of your support system and must be drilled under pressure until you are confident you can apply these techniques immediately and effectively if needed.

Here we see an example of a typical frontal holdup threat. Keeping your hands high, feign capitulation as you ask a brain-engaging question, "All right, what do you want?" Use this as a trigger for your trap and then strike with your knees. Next use whatever is in your environment as a weapon, in this case the wall.



If your attacker has obscured your vision, your only indication of what hand the knife is in will come from tactile awareness. That is, you will have to feel lightly and quickly with your hands, using light little touches while distracting him with dialogue. ''Take it easy. What do you want?" You want both hands and all your fingers to pull sharply down on the upper part of his bearing arm just a few inches to clear the blade from your throat. Anchor his weapon arm to your chest with your left hand and keep it there, as your right hand feels all the way across his arm until you find where his elbow bends. Then in one fast, continuous motion turn out of the hold by moving in a clockwise direction, pushing forward with your chest and trunk (still pinning his bearing hand to your chest). Keep this pressure moving forward and down against the natural motion of his elbow joint. There is no sudden progression here; you make it sudden and sharp, using the pain to disarm him.

Continue the motion into a takedown. Drive your knee into his thigh or groin if he doesn't go straight down. Once he's on the floor, drop your knee into his face or finish with toe punts to his head and face.



From this very undesirable position, get your hands up and close to the weapon-bearing hand. Tactile awareness will be your only indication of where the knife is. Remember to feign compliancy and cover your movements with dialogue. Once you have established where the blade hand is latch onto his wrist with both hands and pull down sharply a few inches, pinning his hand to your own chest. Maintain this grip until the threat is eliminated.

Feel for where his elbow bends and turn out of his hold explosively in a clockwise direction, using one explosive and continuous movement against his elbow joint as you take him to the ground. From here, knee-drop the face or finish with your feet.

Knife Holdup Threat from the Flank

In this final scenario the subject has approached from your flank and is holding the knife against the side of your neck as shown.

Employing the stated principles, clear the line of assault and maintain an index on the weapon-bearing limb. Follow up immediately with a palm strike or multiple strikes into the side of the head.

An option to blast out the low line will present itself, which in this case you exploit with knee strikes.

From here, slam the subject into the wall and finish with a kick to the groin.

CHAPTER 16

ADAPTING TO YOUR ENVIRONMENT

This chapter covers how to adapt your combative skills to fit the environment, which in this case relates to the space and dimension of your surroundings. For example, you might find yourself caught up in an escalating altercation at extreme close quarters (ECQ), perhaps in the confined space of a phone booth, an elevator, or a staircase, or even while seated in a crowded cinema, a train/subway compartment, or your own vehicle. Among the restrictions in this kind of situation are the hard skills you will be able to use—the options available to you in a confined space are vastly different from those that will work in an open space. Having said that, the majority of our close-combat hard skills can be adapted to fit most situations and of course they are also designed to be used effectively at close quarters.

HOW ARE YOU LIMITED BY CONFINED SPACES?

The concern here is how places of confinement might limit some of your options and prevent your escape. A stairwell with narrow corridors may not only restrict your movement, but also harbor potential areas for an ambush. As part of your awareness, you should always know where such areas to avoid are. Understand that criminal opportunists seek to use such places to their advantage. Although an open space, such as the street, may allow you to be attacked from more than one front, it will at least allow you the space to maneuver.

Sometimes you can use a confined space to your advantage if you are facing more than one aggressor. For example, standing just inside an open doorway allows you to protect your flanks by making the only available approach single file from the front, which affords you much better odds than if you were surrounded. The following provides some ideas of how to adapt your game to a confined dimension.

Stairwells

There are many situations in which you might find yourself using a stairwell. In a hospital, a multi-story car park, an apartment building or any number of public places will all make use of stairs. Add to this the confines of narrow space and poor lighting and you have a haven of an environment for potential criminal activity. As always, awareness of environment is the key to avoidance. If a particular place or environment is known as a

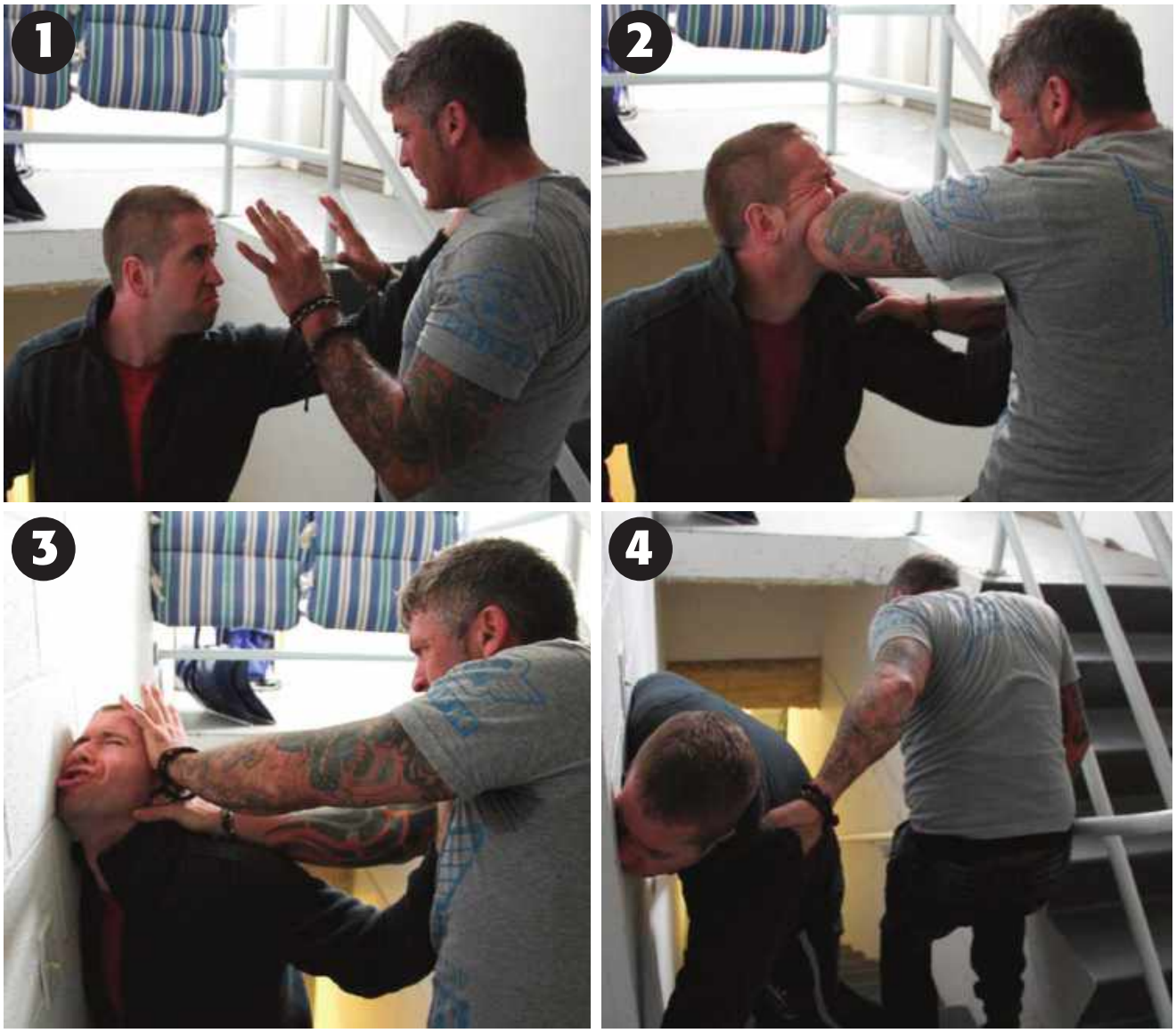
trouble spot or triggers your instincts to avoid it, then pay attention and avoid that space.

If you find yourself in a potential confrontation on a stairwell, then as always your basic game plan still applies. Only now you will have to adapt to the conditions in which you find yourself. If you are on your way up the stairs and the potential threat is a couple of steps above, you will need to be aware of the danger of him kicking or shoving you down the stairs. If you feel the need to strike, then be first. Your target options from here will be dictated by your situational positioning.

If he is above you, his groin and thighs might be the only options available. A good shot in the testicles or an elbow to the thigh, followed by the action of ragging your subject around and into the railing or wall or straight down the stairs behind you, is a good tactical combination.

If you are approached as you walk down the stairs and the threat is a few steps below you, then his head will be your target of choice. A good, solid shot or even a shove will send your assailant reeling backwards, providing you with the opportunity to escape. Just remember to stay switched on, and if you need to strike, then do so first and use your environment—any walls, floors, or sharp edges can and should be used to your advantage.

In this example the subject has approached from a few steps below, thus making your primary target the head and face, which is met with a clinching elbow strike. Follow this up with an incidental strike that rams the aggressor into a nearby wall, leaving you a clear path to escape.



The photos in this sequence depict the same scenario from the opposite view.

In this sequence, we look at the opposite scenario, where the subject now has the advantage of high ground, with his approach coming from above.

Here the initial entry starts with the aggressor indexing your body in order to shove you off balance and punch your head continuously. Awareness of and potential threat recognition will make the difference between an ambush assault that you won't see coming and a moment to brace and retaliate!

Your immediate retaliation begins with a good, solid punch/strike in the balls, followed by a fast "leg pickup" that will propel him off his feet and drive his head into the stairs for additional environmental damage!

From here there is an option to follow up with your feet, should the need to continue present itself, before making your exit onward and upward.

This series depicts this scenario from the opposite angle for additional clarity.

There are many situations in which we might find the need to respond from a seated position. Some examples might be sat at a table in a restaurant or on a stool at a bar or whilst sat on a park bench or in a seat at the cinema. In the first two examples the chair itself is moveable and can therefore be bought into play as a makeshift weapon should the need arise whereas in the last two examples the seating is immovable and will require a different tactic. In all cases the obvious factor is that if we are aware that a potential threat exists then we should take every opportunity to avoid and escape or at the very least not allow ourselves to be caught in a seated position if at all possible. Here we are assuming that we have indeed been caught off guard and now have to deal with the problem from where ever we are, in this case seated. The following sequences will depict several scenarios where we can use our immediate surroundings and environment to our advantage.

If the opportunity exists, get up quickly and use your chair as a temporary barrier in an attempt to de-escalate the situation. If that's not happening, immediately kick the chair explosively into his low line and follow up as appropriate before making your exit.

Here you are faced with sudden hostility in an office setting, where you are momentarily seated.

If you are caught seated, then a good first response is to boot out his low line to create distance. Then immediately get to your feet and pick up the chair, which makes a good barrier/weapon of opportunity for an immediate follow-up.

From here, make your escape at the first opportunity.

Right: An additional option for you is to pick up anything convenient to maximize your potential for winning–in this case, a pair of office scissors makes a fine improvised weapon!

In this sequence, the subject closes in while you are still seated and proceeds to punch at your high line repeatedly. The first response is to default and cover with your "startle guard" in order to be able to sustain the initial assault and bring the fight back to you!

Your immediate offensive follow-up employs a fast takedown to his primary facing leg using an elbow strike just above the knee as you pull sharply on the back of his lower leg, taking the subject down hard as you rise up from the seat.

Remove the subject's mobility with a hard stomp to his closer ankle before making your escape at the earliest opportunity.

Here we see the key counteroffensive structure from the opposite perspective.

The Confinement of an Automobile

To be fair, as long as you lock your car doors whenever you are stationary, which in itself will practically eliminate the chances of you being carjacked and you don't make the mistake of picking up a hitchhiker, then the risk of finding yourself in the kind of situation covered here should be extremely rare. On the other hand, taxi drivers are at risk literally every time they pick up a fare. In fact, I know of several who have experienced the kind of scenarios discussed here. In most cases, the motive was robbery, and the knife threat was used to force compliance. Let's face it: if someone wants to stab you in the confinement of your car, all he would have to do is sit in the back and stab you repeatedly while your attention is elsewhere. In such a case, there wouldn't be much you could do about it if you had no inclination that an attack was coming. I know of one case where a taxi driver was stabbed with a carving knife that the attacker rammed straight through the back of the driver's seat and into the driver's back! The victim actually survived the incident and still works as a taxi driver today, except now he will only drive an FX4 London black cab that offers him the protection of a completely separate compartment from his passengers.

If the motive is robbery, you must decide whether to give up your money, valuables, or car in order to escape safely, or to focus your indignation and fight back. It is not for me to tell you what choice to make; only you can make that call. Bear in mind, however, that evidence shows even if you offer complete compliance in such a situation you may still get stabbed or slashed regardless. With that said, here are a few typical scenarios involving a knife threat in the confinement of a vehicle.

Your response—and what you are now doing *is* responding to something that is happening to you—will depend on a set of variables, such as the situation your facing, the options available to you, and, of course, whether you hesitate or freeze from fear or shock. As you already know, the adrenal dump will make the majority of your training options unavailable to you anyway. That's why any response must be a basic gross motor skill and well practiced. Regardless of this, here are a few basics to consider.

Your first response, assuming you had even the slightest indication of an armed attack, should al-

ways be to escape. If your vehicle is stationary and the option is available to you, just open the door, exit the car, and leg it. If you can't escape, feign compliance (using the techniques taught in and then, if you can, grab an equalizer and beat the fucker into submission in true caveman style until you eliminate the threat. If you are anything like me, you will always have some kind of improvised weapon handy in your car. A four-cell Maglite flashlight kept handy can make a great equalizer and is legal to carry everywhere, as it is not a weapon by design nor has it been modified in any way to be used as such.

If you can't escape and there is no equalizer available, then to quote Kelly McCann, "It is time to get big or go home!" In other words, you must now eliminate the threat by whatever means available. This is, in essence, the concept of the 3 Es that was covered on page 146.

In this first scenario, the assailant is in the front passenger seat and is holding a knife to your throat.

The first thing you've got to get over is the severe emotional response that will be present here. This requires repetition and practice using spontaneous scenario training, along with visualization and crisis rehearsal as part of your mental conditioning to respond effectively. In a physical sense, use deceptive dialogue and feign capitulation as you get your hands into a position from which you can use them. Next get both of your "meat hooks" on his weapon-bearing wrist/hand and pull the knife hand clear as you retract your head to clear of the line of assault. Be sure to seize the limb and do not let go until you have neutralized the threat!

Now you can employ two of your secondary weapon options: biting the thumb joint to cause the attacker to drop the knife and smashing his weapon-bearing limb into the steering wheel or dashboard to help bring about the release.

Drive your left foot into the floor between the doorjamb and the floor structure to gain traction and purchase as you drive the top of your head into the subject's face so you can escape the first chance you get.

In the next example, you're held up from the back-seat of your vehicle. The same deceptive and tactile principles apply. Here you can clear the line of assault and attack with the only option available: the bite!

In this situation, the ideal is to get the joint of the thumb and bite with the intent of severing the fucker!

From here smash the weapon hand off any available surface, in this case the handbrake. Continue with backhands Axe Hands into the high line until you create the opportunity to get the door open and bail!

Here we see the same scenario, but the robber is using the opposite hand. The same principles apply: be tactile as you feign capitulation to feel where the weapon hand is.

In one movement clear the line of assault.

Bite the thumb joint and then smash the weapon-bearing hand into the window/doorjamb structure of the vehicle to force a release of the knife. If the window is closed, continue to smash the hand until he drops the weapon.

If the window is open, this will provide the opportunity to ballistically manipulate the joint by wrenching the arm against the open doorjamb as exit the vehicle.

CONCLUSION

I have presented you with a general overview of the UC curriculum. Of course, you can't learn anything worthwhile from a book or DVD alone—you've got to train. Think of this book as a supplement to competent hands-on instruction. I recommend that you find a reputable instructor and dovetail the basic principles of what he teaches with some of the recommendations in this book. Alternatively find a like-minded training partner, get yourself some impact equipment, and train the skill sets offered here to a competent level. For more information on UC classes, instructors, or seminars, as well as instructional media, check out our website at www.urbancombatives.com.

—Peace, 2015